The

No. 332 (New Series), Vol. 7. July 30, 1938

TWOPENCE

# PASSING SHOW

*Another* MOLLY O'ROURKE Story by FRANK KING

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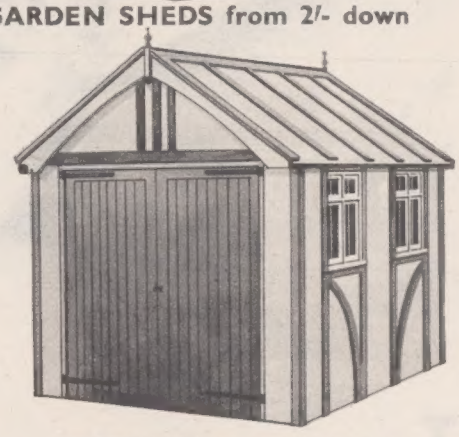

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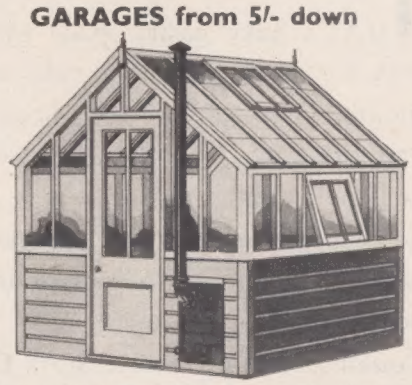

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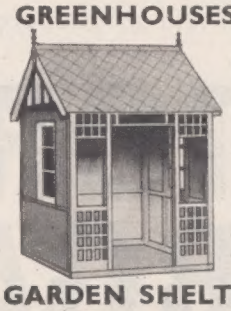

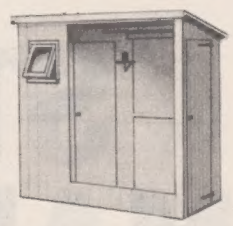

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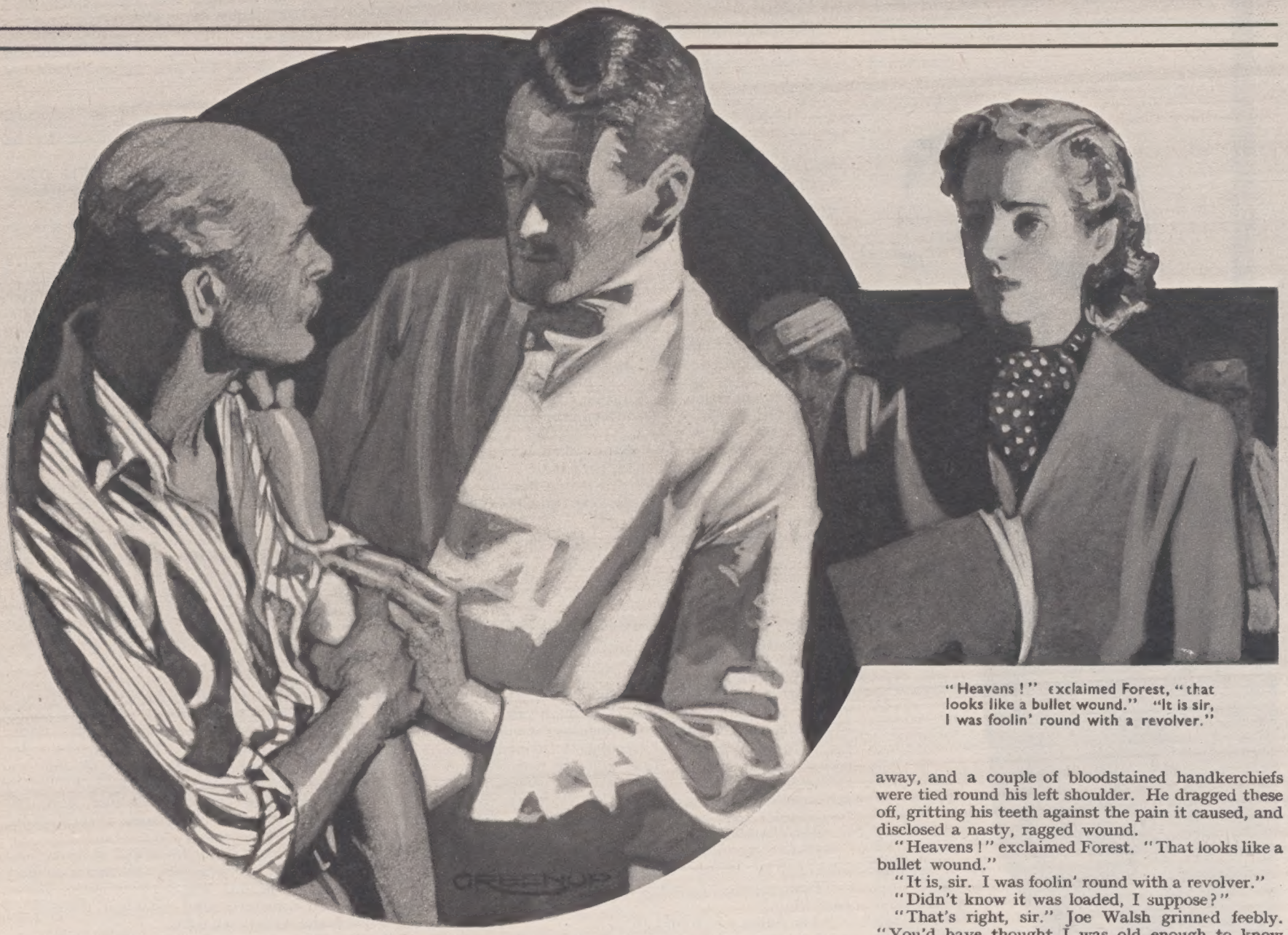


"Heavens!" exclaimed Forest, "that looks like a bullet wound." "It is sir, I was foolin' round with a revolver."

# BULLET PROOF

**Molly O'Rourke, red headed hospital almoner, goes sleuthing again when she meets a wounded man who is eager to be arrested for something he didn't do**

## BY FRANK KING

ILLUSTRATED BY J. GREENUP, R.I.

AS a rule Molly O'Rourke did not visit the casualty room of the Royal Edward Hospital. For one thing she was not yet hardened to the sight of the accidents that came in there. For another, Doctor Alan Forest was Resident Surgical Officer and saw most of the cases. Molly liked Doctor Forest far too well to flirt with him. She knew how he felt towards her and because there wasn't a chance for him, she kept out of his way as much as possible.

Occasionally, however, her duties, as almoner, necessitated her presence amongst the accidents. She was busy making some enquiries one morning, when her attention was attracted to a middle-aged man who sat at the extreme end of a form, quietly awaiting his turn.

He was very respectably dressed and looked like a better-class workman. Glancing at him unobtrusively, Molly saw that he was either nervous or anxious. His hands trembled whenever he fingered his bristly moustache. Occasionally a spasm of pain flickered across his face.

After watching him for a while, she approached Doctor Forest, who had just finished splinting a fracture.

"That man on the left looks pretty bad," she said. "Does he?" Alan Forest gazed into her blue eyes, flushed, then turned in the direction indicated. "Yes, he does. I'll take him next. Say, you! Come along."

The man rose and came forward, carrying the card on which his name and address had already been inscribed. Forest glanced at it and laid it on the desk.

"Joe Walsh," he said. "Well, what's the matter with you?"

For reply, the man slowly peeled off his coat and waistcoat. The sleeve of his shirt had been cut away, and a couple of bloodstained handkerchiefs were tied round his left shoulder. He dragged these off, gritting his teeth against the pain it caused, and disclosed a nasty, ragged wound.

"Heavens!" exclaimed Forest. "That looks like a bullet wound."

"It is, sir. I was foolin' round with a revolver."

"Didn't know it was loaded, I suppose?"

"That's right, sir." Joe Walsh grinned feebly. "You'd have thought I was old enough to know better than that, wouldn't you?"

"Anyone can make a mistake." Forest was probing the wound. "You're not making much fuss about it. And I'm sure it hurts."

"Not much use fussin', is it?"

"Pity we can't all take things so philosophically. Your shoulder's broken, Walsh. And the bullet's still there amongst the pieces. You'll have to come in for an operation."

"Very well, sir. I guessed as much."

Forest touched a bell and when an orderly appeared, scribbled an admission card and told him to take the patient along to Ward 6.

"I'll have a look for that bullet this afternoon, Walsh," he said.

"Thank you, sir. I'm much obliged."

With his coat over his arm, Joe Walsh followed the orderly from the room. Molly watched him go, then turned back to Forest.

"He's got some pluck, hasn't he?" she said. "I could see that he was in pain."

"Looks to me as though he'll be in trouble before long," said Forest, grimly.

"What do you mean?"

"We were notified this morning to be on the lookout for any bullet wounds. It seems there was a burglary at Arpingden last night. The burglar was shot before he'd a chance to steal anything, but he managed to get away. I'm afraid that tale about a revolver going off accidentally won't wash."

"My gracious! And he looks so quiet and inoffensive, doesn't he? I rather liked him."

"I suppose there are different kinds of burglars," agreed Forest. "Anyhow, I'll have to let the police know about him."

After this Molly was not at all surprised, later in the morning, to see her old friend Detective-Inspector Pomeroy of Scotland Yard. He came into her office, his pleasant features eager, as always, for a sight of her, and offered his cigarette case.

*(please turn over)*

Detective-Inspector Pomeroy had just entered the building and was walking towards them, barring their way

"For once in a way," he said, "I'm combining duty with pleasure."

Molly had a smile which no one but he had seen.

"You're after that poor man, Joe Walsh, I suppose?" she enquired.

"Why poor man?"

"Oh, he seemed so plucky. Never even winced when Doctor Forest was examining him. Is he the burglar?"

"He says not. But I don't think there's much doubt about it. Anyhow, I've arrested him."

"You're not going to take him to prison with a shoulder like that, surely?"

"Oh, no. He'll stay here until he's all right. But there's a constable sitting in the ward with him."

"What makes you think he's the burglar if he says he isn't?"

Frank Pomeroy shrugged. "Did you believe his story about the revolver going off accidentally?"

"I don't know that I did."

"Very well, then. Add to this the fact that he's an old lag who has spent most of his time in prison, and the combination seems rather irresistible."

"In other words he's a bad lot, Pom-Pom?".

"I'm afraid he is."

Molly laughed. "And I rather liked him. It's a good job I'm not a policeman, isn't it?"

Pomeroy was on the point of telling her that she would make a perfect wife for a certain policeman he knew, but thought better of it.

"Doing anything special to-night, Molly?" he asked.

"No. Why?"

"I could get off. Perhaps a spot of dinner somewhere, and a show?"

"There are times, Pom-Pom," cried Molly, blue eyes sparkling, "when you sound positively inspired."

Next morning business took her into Ward 6. As always, every face lighted up when her slender, red-headed figure appeared through the door. She walked down the ward, stopping at every bed for a cheery word, happy to see how frequently she could bring a smile to these suffering features.

The bed at the end of the ward was enclosed by a screen. Passing behind this, Molly found Joe Walsh lying quiet and uncomplaining as usual, with a constable sitting beside the bed.

"Good morning, constable," she said. "Good morning, Mr. Walsh. How are you to-day?"

"Fine, missie," he replied. "I had my operation yesterday."

"The bullet was found all right?"

"I reckon so. The cops took charge of it." Joe Walsh grinned. "I'd be all right now if this bloke sittin' here didn't give me the jim-jams."

The constable rose to his feet and winked at Molly.

"If you're staying here a minute or two, miss," he said, "I'll just stretch my legs."

"All right, constable. I'll wait until you come back."

As soon as he had gone, Mr. Walsh sat up in bed.

"I've been arrested," he announced, proudly.

"You seem very pleased about it," said Molly. "I think you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"So I should be, missie," he replied, "if I'd done it."

"Didn't you?"

"No. But they won't believe me." He looked at her anxiously. "Is it in the papers? That bloke won't let me see one. About my arrest, I mean."

"Yes, I noticed a small paragraph."

"That's all right, then." His sigh of relief was quite audible. "I thought it would be."

Molly gazed at him curiously. In spite of what Pom-Pom had told her about him, she still couldn't help liking him. She'd had proof of his courage. And he was certainly no grouser.

"You're a queer sort of individual, aren't you?" she said. "You seem quite joyful about the fact that you've been arrested. Why are you so anxious that the news should be in the papers?"

"Nay, missie!" He grinned again. "You can't expect me to tell you that." The smile faded as he looked into her puzzled, blue eyes. "You're a good sort. I know that. I suppose it's no use askin' you to do somethin' for me."

"Depends what it is."

"It's a simple enough thing. But the cops mustn't know about it."

"Then I'm afraid I can't help you."

"Wait a minute. Please!" His voice was very low and earnest. "It's all right, missie. Honestly it is. I wouldn't ask you to do anythin' that was wrong. It's only a question of a—a pal of mine who's ill. I'd like to know how he's gettin' on."

"Why can't the police know about it?"

"They'd think I was up to some game, tryin' to frame an alibi or somethin' of the kind. And I'm not, missie. I swear it. I'm just anxious about my pal. That's all."

Molly hesitated. It might be very foolish of her to grant this request. Yet she felt sure that the man was speaking the truth. She didn't believe that he would try to deceive her.

"It's only a matter of a telephone call," he urged.

"Where to?" she asked, taking out her notebook.

"Arpingden, 0432."

"Arpingden?" She closed her book with a snap. "That's where the burglary was."

"I know. But it's all right, missie. You're a good sort and I wouldn't let you down. Just ask to speak to Mrs. Kirby at the lodge. You needn't give her any name. Just tell her you want to know how Fred is. There can't be any harm in that, can there?"

"I suppose not." Molly looked at him doubtfully. It couldn't be a question of disposing of the loot, because nothing had been stolen. He might be trying to fake an alibi, but somehow she didn't think so. Her work at the hospital had made her a pretty good judge of character and, in spite of Joe Walsh's criminal record, she felt that he could be trusted. Suddenly she decided to do as he wished. "All right," she agreed. "I'll see about it straight away."

"Thank you, missie." His homely face shone with gratitude. "It'll set my mind at rest."

As soon as the constable returned, she hurried back to her office and put the call through. A girl's voice, agitated and anxious, answered.

"Is that Mrs. Kirby?" asked Molly.

"Yes. Who are you?"

"Never mind. I just want to know how Fred is?"

"He's doing all right. But who——"

"That's all, thank you."

Molly hung up, returned to Ward 6, and reported to Joe Walsh, who thanked her with a smile. Though he couldn't say much in front of the constable, his relief was so obvious that she began to wonder whether perhaps she had been fooled. The inquiry had seemed harmless enough. She couldn't imagine any important message being hidden away in it. All the same—well, it would be dreadful if she had let Pom-Pom down.

As she carried on with her work that morning, the thought continued to worry her. So much so that eventually she went into the porter's lodge, got a Hertfordshire directory, and searched through it until she found Arpingden 0432.

Horton House! Actually the place where the burglary had occurred! Her smooth brow wrinkled in dismay as she stared at the closely-printed page. There was something wrong. Joe Walsh had used her as a catspaw.

For a moment she was tempted to ring up Pom-Pom and tell him all about it, confessing how she had been fooled. Then she decided against this. She'd tackle the job herself, and find out exactly what was happening.

Glancing through a railway timetable, she saw there was a train to Arpingden which she could just catch. In a surprisingly short time she was knocking on the door of the lodge at Horton House.

Mrs. Kirby proved to be a girl no older than herself, who gazed at the visitor with startled eyes.

"I want to see Fred," said Molly, at once.

The startled expression turned into definite fear.

"Who are you?"

"I telephoned a while ago to inquire about him. Now I must see him."

"I—I'm sorry. He's too ill to see anyone."

"What's the matter with him?"

"Influenza. We—we're frightened of pneumonia."

"All the same I must see him," said Molly, firmly. She tried a shot in the dark. "If not, I shall have to go to the police station."

She hated herself when she saw the girl shrink back as though someone had struck her. But the bluff had worked. A moment later she was following Mrs. Kirby up the stairs into the bedroom of the little cottage.

The place was neat and scrupulously clean, the bedspread almost startlingly white. But very little whiter, Molly decided, than the face of the young fellow who lay in the bed. Not a sign of fever about him. Whatever his complaint might be, it was certainly neither influenza nor pneumonia.

She sat down on a chair beside him.

"I want to know something about you, Mr. Kirby," she said.

Some colour crept back into his pleasant features. His wife stood at the other side of the bed and her fingers groped for his. He tried to smile at her, but the attempt was not very successful.

"What do you want to know?" he asked.

"Everything," said Molly.

She plied him with questions and learned that he was employed as gardener at Horton House. He had been married about a year and there was a baby on the way.

A simple homely story, with nothing to account for the fear which these two showed. But as Fred Kirby faltered out his replies to her questions, Molly noticed a red spot appear on the white counterpane. And this spot gradually grew larger, so that she knew he was bleeding.

"You'd better let me have a look at your leg, hadn't you?" she said suddenly.

Lily Kirby uttered a startled exclamation.

"That bandage has come off again, Fred," she gasped.

"I've some experience of nursing," said Molly, turning up the bed-coverings. "I'll help you to put it right."

A bandage round Fred Kirby's left leg had slipped. There were two wounds in his calf, obviously made by the entrance and exit of a bullet. Molly helped Mrs. Kirby to dress these, then sat down again.

"Now," she said. "You'd better tell me the truth about that burglary, hadn't you?"

Fred and Lily looked at one another for a moment in silence. Fred swallowed hard as he turned to Molly.

"Yes, I'll tell you," he faltered. "I knew it would have to come out in the end."

It was a familiar enough recital of human folly. Fred's wages had not been big enough to cover his losses on horse-racing. He was hopelessly in debt. And with the prospect of an addition to the family, he had decided on desperate measures to add to his income. His employer, Mr. Frobisher, was a wealthy man. A few bits of things from the house would never be missed. But they would solve the problem which was worrying Fred to death.

"I can see now what a fool I was, miss," he told Molly, earnestly. "But that isn't much good, is it?"

He kept nothing back, describing how he had gone to a neighbouring town on the night before last with the idea of making an alibi for himself. About midnight he had returned, and found a way into Horton House. Before he had time to look round properly, his amateurish methods had wakened Mr. Frobisher, who promptly let fly with the loaded revolver he always kept under his pillow. Fred had managed to get away unseen, and stagger down the drive to the lodge.

"I thought it was all up with me," he went on. "But when I got home I found Uncle Joe with Lily."

"Joe Walsh?" asked Molly.

"Yes. Do you know him?"

"I've met him. Go on."

Uncle Joe, it seemed, had a fertile brain. He had taken charge of the situation at once, and told Lily to put Fred to bed. Horton House was blazing with lights by now and it wouldn't be long before the police, summoned by telephone, would be here. They would naturally make enquiries at the lodge and Lily had to tell them that Fred had returned home earlier in the evening, very ill, and that he was really too bad to be seen.

"I told Uncle Joe it wouldn't work." Lily took up the tale. "The police might be put off for a while, but sooner or later they'd be bound to grow suspicious. There was blood in the house, proving that the burglar had been shot, and they were sure to think it strange that Fred had had to go to bed. I thought the best thing was to make a clean breast of it all. But Uncle Joe said no. He'd a plan which would remove any suspicion from Fred. He'd have to get off now before the police arrived, but I mustn't worry. Everything would come all right."

"I see," said Molly. "And were any suspicions roused?"

"I don't think so. The police seemed quite satisfied when I told them Fred was ill. But they're sure to come again."

"They won't." Molly shook her head. "Uncle Joe's plan has worked. Haven't you see this morning's paper?"

"No, I've been too busy."

"Then I'll tell you. He was arrested yesterday in a London hospital. He'd a bullet in his shoulder."

"Heavens!" Fred sat up in bed. "Do you mean

(*please turn over.*)

**Molly stopped abruptly, gripping Joe's arm. She groaned. If he recognised her companion all would be lost. And his sharp eyes missed nothing—somehow she must prevent a meeting**

that he's deliberately shot himself and taken the blame——? "

"That's precisely what he has done," agreed Molly.

"Oh, but we can't have that! I'm not going to let him go to prison for what I've done." He threw back the coverings. "Lily! you must 'phone the police at once!"

"Wait a minute, Mr. Kirby. Remember that his plan has succeeded. Now that he's arrested, the police are not looking for anyone else. You're quite safe."

"That doesn't matter. I'm not going to hide behind him. I'll take my punishment."

"Good for you!" cried Molly. "I'm glad to hear that." She looked at the agitated young fellow thoughtfully, for a moment. He'd some backbone in him after all. Anyone could make a mistake once. And perhaps it would be a pity to spoil this scheme Joe Walsh had planned so carefully. "Look here! Suppose I help you out of this mess. Are you going to act the fool again?"

"I shouldn't do that, miss, whatever happened. But it's no use talking about getting out of this because there's no chance of it. I'm not going to let Uncle Joe go to prison."

"Well, don't be in such a hurry. I'm going back to the hospital now, to see your uncle. We'll talk it over and decide the best thing to do. I'll give you a ring later in the day. Promise not to do anything until you hear from me."

"All right," agreed Fred, reluctantly. "But you've got to understand——."

"I know. There may be some way of keeping you both out of prison."

It was all wrong, of course. Molly felt uncomfortable as she made her way back to town. Pom-Pom wouldn't approve. Fred Kirby ought to be punished. Yet prison would do him a lot more harm than good. And it seemed such a pity that Joe Walsh's self-sacrifice should be wasted. He must be very fond of Fred to have acted like this.

But so far as she could see, there was no way in which she could help either of them. She puzzled her brain over the situation as the train carried her back to St. Pancras. She was no nearer a solution to the problem when she reached the hospital.

Obviously she must have a word with Joe Walsh; and somehow she must get rid of that policeman while she talked to him. This was not very difficult. A word to Doctor Forest did the trick. She took him along to Ward 6, and the constable obligingly retired while the patient was examined.

Molly wasted no time in coming to the point.

"I've just been to Horton House," she said. "I've seen Fred. I know all about this mad idea of yours."

"Blimey!" muttered Joe, startled. "I didn't think you'd do that." He smiled ruefully at Doctor Forest. "That's torn it, hasn't it?"

"I want to know," Molly went on, "what made you do such a thing."

"I might as well tell you, I suppose, missie. Fred's my boy."

"Your son?"

"Yes. His mother died while he was a little 'un. I didn't want him to know what kind of a life his father was leadin'; so I got a pal of mine to bring him up as his own. He doesn't know that his old man's such a waster. I've been along to see him sometimes, you understand, and he's always called me Uncle Joe. I'd just dropped in accidental, like, that night. I was in a fair stew, I can tell you, when he came hobblin' in, and I heard that he'd taken the wrong road. It seemed to me that if I could get him out of this jam, maybe it'd be a lesson to him."

"And you put a bullet in your shoulder with that hope?"

"I'd have put it into me heart if I'd thought it would have done any good."

"Well, it has done some good," said Molly. "You can take it from me that he'll not go wrong again. He was going to give himself up as soon as he heard about you."

"You mustn't let him do that!" cried Joe. "Please, missie! It doesn't matter about me. I'm used to it. I can go to gaol with a contented mind if I know he's goin' straight."

"I don't see why you should be put in prison for something you haven't done."

"I'm afraid there's no way out of that. But I'm not worried so long as Fred's all right. I suppose it's no use askin' you not to blow the gaff?"

"I'm not going to tell anyone what I've found out," said Molly. "But I want to help you, too."

"Don't worry your pretty head about me."

"If only there were some way—." Molly looked from Joe to Alan Forest and back again. Suddenly a mischievous sparkle lit up in her blue eyes. "Listen! There's no fear now of Fred being suspected, is there? If you disappeared, what would happen?"

"The cops would be after me."

"Suppose we could get you out of here. Do you know of any place where you could hide?"

"Sure. But there's no chance of shakin' off that constable bloke. He'll stick to me like a leech."

"I've got an idea." Molly dimpled. Shamelessly, she put her arms round Doctor Forest's neck and whispered into his ear. "Is your patient fit to walk?"

"Yes. He's quite fit physically."

"Then couldn't you do this for him?"

For quite a long time Alan Forest had found himself constitutionally incapable of refusing Molly anything. He raised his eyebrows as she detailed her plan, but at once agreed to do what she wanted. Removing the screen, he called for a nurse.

"This patient requires another immediate operation," he said. "See that he's sent down to the theatre at once, will you?"

"Yes, doctor."

Together Molly and Doctor Forest walked along the corridors to the operating theatre. Soon afterwards Joe Walsh was wheeled in. The constable who had accompanied him was provided with a chair just outside the door.

He had not been waiting long when Molly came out again, accompanied by a strange figure garbed in white overalls, white cap and a mask such as surgeons wear, covering most of his face. The two walked quickly away, and the constable watched them with interest.

Molly's heart was palpitating a little as she accompanied Joe Walsh along the corridors towards her office. Here, his outdoor clothes were waiting. If only they could reach it without rousing any suspicions, all would be well.

Though several people showed a certain amount of surprise at seeing a surgeon strolling round in operating attire, no one spoke to them. But as they reached the last corner, Molly stopped abruptly, gripping Joe's arm. Detective-Inspector Pomeroy had just entered the building and was walking towards them, barring their way.

His pleasant features broke into a smile at sight of her. She groaned. If he recognised her companion all would be lost. And his sharp eyes missed nothing. Somehow she must prevent a meeting.

She summoned up all her courage. She hated the thought of deceiving him. But it wasn't right that Joe Walsh should go to prison.

"You'll find what you want in my office, Doctor," she said, loudly. "The first on the left."

Frank Pomeroy stood watching as the white-clad figure walked rather unsteadily towards the door indicated. Then he turned to Molly.

"Our friend Joe has made a very speedy recovery, hasn't he?" he observed.

"W-what do you mean?" she faltered.

"Passed his examinations in great style, too. I wasn't aware that he'd even started studying for the medical profession."

He knew! He had recognised Joe. Molly groaned again. She couldn't imagine what to do.

She stared at Pomeroy stupidly. Suddenly she realised that his eyes were twinkling.

"I've just come to send the constable away," he went on. "We've examined the bullet extracted from Joe's shoulder, and it was not fired from Mr. Frobisher's revolver. He isn't the burglar."

So that was why he wasn't angry with her. Molly's courage failed her completely. If he'd found out so much, he'd soon be on Fred Kirby's track.

"I could have told you that long ago," she muttered, hardly knowing what she said.

"Been doing a little investigating on your own, eh? I rang up a while ago, and the porter told me you'd just left for St. Pancras. You didn't go to Arpingden, by any chance, did you?"

"Pom-Pom! Listen! Joe's a good sort."

"He must be. If he didn't commit that burglary himself, he's obviously been shielding someone else."

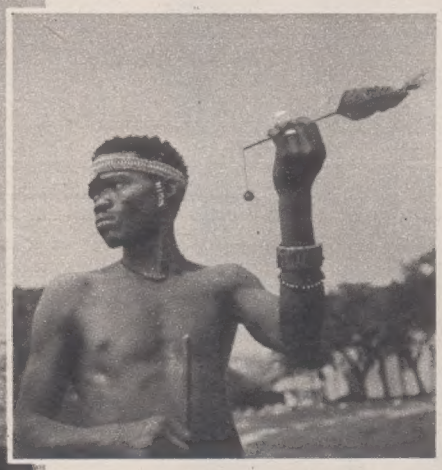
"Will you—have to look for that someone else?" She caught his arm. "After all, nothing was stolen."

"That makes it much more difficult for us, of course. Yes, we shall have to look for him. But I'm not at all sure that we shall find him." Pomeroy smiled. "I know a young lady who sometimes interests herself in burglars and suchlike. I'll try to have a word with her—unofficially, of course—and if she can assure me——."

"Oh, you darling!" After a hurried glance along the corridor, Molly threw her arms round his neck and kissed him. "Take me out to dinner, to-night. please, Pom-Pom, and I'll tell you all about it."

# CURIOSNAPS

*"Passing Show" readers who send in original photographs of queer sights suitable for this feature, receive 10/6 for each picture published. They should enclose stamped envelope*

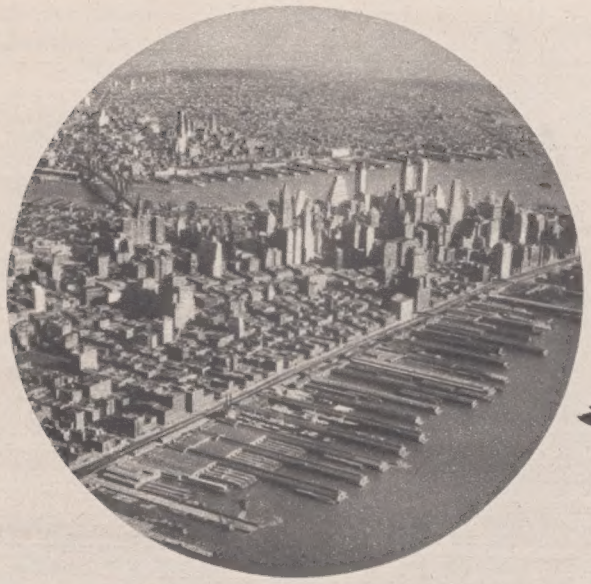


The bushmen of Africa have played a form of tennis or badminton for centuries. A long feather is fastened to a small ball with a thin thread and this is thrown into the air with a stick and tossed to and fro

This is the Aloe or Century plant which is cultivated extensively in Mexico. It flowers every century when allowed to grow but the Mexicans draw the sap from them to make a very strong drink called Maquey and later the thick leaves are used to make rope

# TO HOLLYWOOD FOR £30

## BY A. P. LUSCOMBE-WHYTE



RECENTLY I received an unexpected cheque for £30.

Now, you can do many things with £30. Throw a grand party; buy a radiogram or the best suit in London; bet on a horse; open a bank account, or go to California. I went to California.

London had become one vast, hot yawn. Buses, Piccadilly, Fleet Street, work, pints of bitter and my friends' faces had blurred into a soupy, depressing porrage of pointless existence. Life had gone stale on me. Change indicated.

I did a sum. Cargo ship to Montreal—say, £10. Train to New York—£2. Half share in old car—say, £5. Running costs, tips, bribes and fines to cross the continent—say, £10, Total—£27. In return—the surging Atlantic, the mixture of calm beauty and metropolitan squalor that is Montreal, the soaring excitement of New York, Hollywood's sunny tinsel and the woods, plains, mountains, rivers, lakes, deserts and hot-dog stands of God's Own Country. And a recipe against staleness.

Ten days later, my flat was let, my income-tax collector soothed and I sat drinking schnapps with a Canadian friend and co-traveller in a Rotterdam waterfront café.

"Go to Rotterdam," said a friend, who starts to places all over the world by going to Rotterdam. "Hang around the dockside, buy drinks for sailors, brush a captain up the right way—and you'll get across for a fiver each."

And so it happened. Except that we played roulette with the captain instead of brushing him up.

It took two hectic days of covering the waterfront and pumping schnapps into willing mariners before Captain Lief Svensen exploded through the swing doors of a saloon kept by a Cockney named 'Orace, and entered our lives. He was large, red, black-moustached, and he roared amiably at us when 'Orace, with a whispered (" 'E's your man. Sailin' for Montreal, day after to-morrer") made the introductions. The discovery, after several drinks, that I shared Captain Lief's passion for roulette and could describe to him the casinos he had never entered, cemented the friendship.

After this it seemed natural that as, in a mellow glow of schnapps, several of us steamed out into the later night, Lief should bundle us into two taxis and bellow the way down to his command—a low, slim motor-ship, graceful as a liner. And that we should sit up half the night playing roulette with strangers of six nationalities, eating vast quantities of Swedish hors d'oeuvre and burning our throats with schnapps.

And that several hours later Lief should pack away his system books, pocket £1 of mine, and bellow, "A dam fine system, mine, fellers, ja? A fine, gut evening! Now com wit me. I give you beds to sleep."

Our cabin had been built for the occasional use of the ship's owner and it was, literally, luxurious. Panelled in walnut, at least twenty-five feet square, and furnished with deep, modern arm-chairs. But we didn't notice much of that until next mid-day, when Lief burst in with two schnapps-and-soda ("for your heads, ja?") and shouted: "A very fine night, by dam? You enjoy? You want to com wid me to Montreal? I take you for fife pounds each! And we drink much schnapps and play roulette, nein?"

"Ja!" we said. And two days later (let's forget them) California was approaching at fifteen knots and we were poorer by about eight pounds each. Rotterdam is certainly the place.

Hearty, seems the word to apply to the next ten days. Each day began heartily with a breakfast of steak, or chops, or creamed fish, lubricated with beer—which we ate in the captain's private saloon accompanied by Lief and two "guest" officers at each meal.

We ate sweet soups made from plums and laced with cream. We ate peaches with the meat and fried pineapple with the ham. We ate an infinite variety of hors d'oeuvres. At all meals free beer, wine, or spirits were passed round. Between meals a beer would cost us one penny, a schnapps two-pence.

In the intervals there were hearty games of deck tennis with some of the officers and (after an afternoon's recuperation in the deep armchairs of our cabin) hearty nightly sessions of roulette with Lief. Those sessions came near to upsetting the Hollywood schedule once or twice (notably the evening in calm mid-Atlantic when a crimson, beaming Lief collected six pounds from the bank (me.) Fortunately, the next few nights evened things out, and I eventually landed in Montreal about fifteen shillings up.

For most of the trip, we pitched steadily through the long rollers, but for two memorable days we ran through a typical Atlantic gale, our steel decks swirling under hundreds of tons of water, and our comfortable beds standing on end. Roulette and schnapps were out, and Sven changed suddenly into a grim, taciturn seaman with no time for journalistic deadwood.

Once, too, we were hove to in thick fog off the Grand Banks, to awake hemmed in by great hills of ice a mile or more long and glistening 1,000 feet into the air. A lovely, dangerous, unforgettable sight.

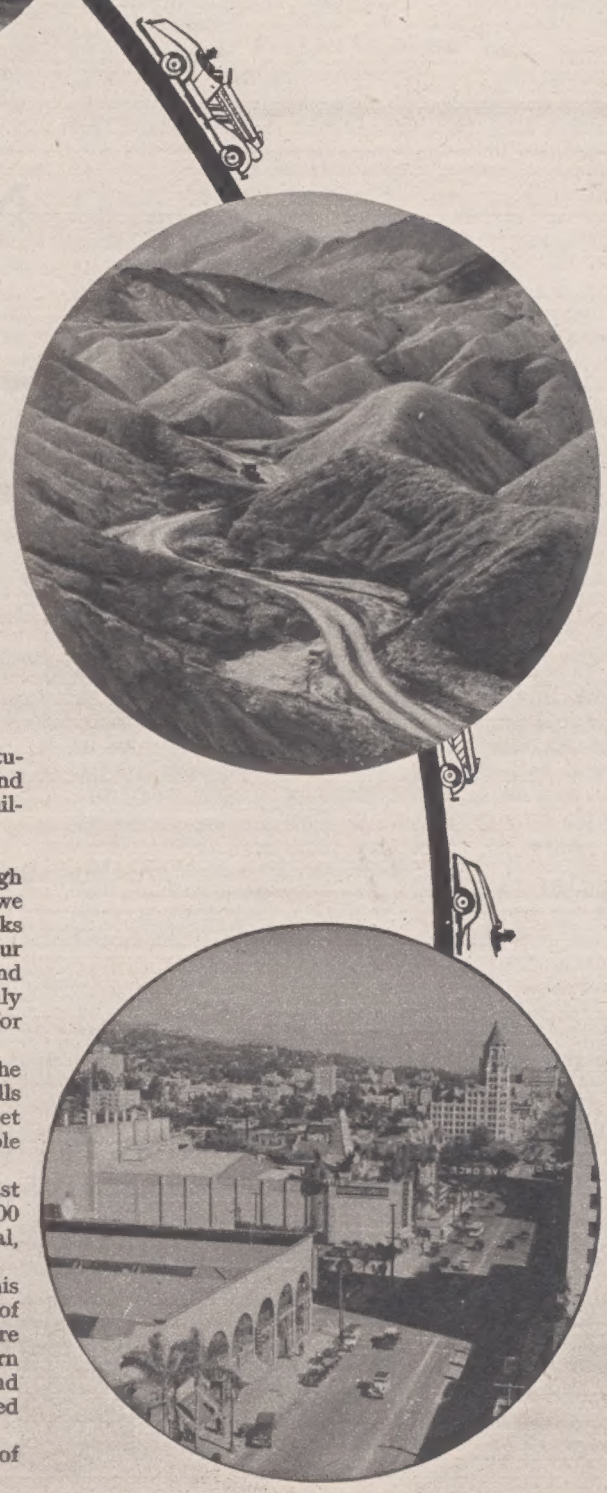
And so, through the straights of Belle Isle, past the grim, cold coast of Labrador and up the 1,000 miles of wooded Saint Lawrence river to Montreal, and the end of the first lap.

A strange, beautiful, contradictory city, this Montreal. A "British" city, where two-thirds of the people speak French; where whole districts are as French as Toulon or Marseilles; where modern skyscrapers—their lower storeys ivy-covered—stand next to dignified old stone mansions. Daubed green with countless parks and gardens.

Where Mount Royal, the "millionaires' hill" of

(*please turn over*)

New York—heat in mid-nineties . . . Times Square, thronged with shirt-sleeved crowds at 3.0 a.m. . . . . nights spent at auto-camps . . . wide parking avenue, flower-filled gardens, bathing and dancing, restaurants . . . cost from 50 cents. to a dollar a night . . . garage free . . . On across country —through oil fields and steel-towns into the California Death Valley, where heat touched 107 degrees; and then one glorious day when we drove on to a winding road with its edges almost lapped by the blue wavelets of the Pacific—and so into Hollywood



magnificent gardened homes rears up a few minutes' from that sailors' paradise, the vulgar, roaring "Main," where you have to sit down to drink your beer and (by law) whisky is obtainable only in clubs. Where the less you say about the gambling "hells" and the cabarets, the more popular you are.

Where people know more about the Royal Family and the Derby chance than the average Londoner. Where we said good-bye to Lief in one final round of the dockside cabarets and where Lief (bless him !) won £15 at roulette in a back parlour.

One week of Montreal hospitality and, armed with dozens of letters of introduction, we roared comfortably down to New York in a 200 m.p.h. twenty-one-seater Douglas at a cost of nothing. The result of a casual meeting with the airline manager. Canada is like that.

Total off my transport budget about £10.

A cocktail impression must cover New York . . . heat in mid-nineties and tropical storms nightly . . . Times-square blazing with light, thronged with shirt-sleeved crowds at 3 a.m. . . . bars open until 4 a.m., cafeterias, subway all night . . . dancing to red-hot negro bands, with cabarets, for a ten cent beer in any of hundreds of dives . . . and every fourth drink "on the house" . . . eating hot meals from coin-in-slot Automats . . . or in Italian, Chinese, negro, French, Russian, Greek, Turkish, German, Spanish restaurants, which feed never-home New Yorkers . . . or at open-air pavement cafés . . . or sixty-six storeys up with the glistening, fantastic city far below the dancers . . . or at East Side hot-dog stands for five cents . . . tea in thirty-storey penthouse apartments where real trees, flowers, fill private roof-gardens . . . "week-end" cottage parties, 200 miles from town . . . every café, bar, cinema air-cooled and arctic after wilting pavement heat . . . Christian names ten minutes after introduction . . . endless invitations . . . steaks, joints cellophane-wrapped . . . pageant of arriving liners . . . £50 silk stockings in 5th Avenue store . . . dozens of college graduates working in garages, sleeping out in Central Park . . . continual screaming police cars . . . once, shots in the distance . . . Noise, Noise, NOISE. . . .

Several weeks of this, because business kept me in the city. Our first headquarters were in a lovely, 200-year-old, Greenwich Village house, lent me, quite casually, by an American acquaintance, where the beards, green shirts, long hair and trousered women who kept on looking in for drinks (*without* introduction) reminded me of distant Chelsea.

Then to rooms in 75th Street, near Central Park, kept by a tough, old Scotch-American woman with a basement full of bags, radios, pictures, and indescribable oddments seized from rent-defaulters. Not so tough, perhaps . . . for a parcel containing two apple pies and a bottle of whisky sped us on our way to California. Also two kisses and "let me know how you make out, fellers."

Then, with business done, to find the car.

"Try one of them open lots up in the Bronx," said a friendly cop. "They'll fix you up for fifty bucks."

We took the Elevated up to dilapidated, shacky 145th Street and picked one of a dozen nearby vacant lots, where hundreds of used cars stood crowded together. Luck picked a good one for us and a fat, smiling, honest, beer-drinking Italian who sold us an open Chevrolet in very good condition for fifty dollars and then insisted on adding an engine overhaul and two spare tyres out of sheer goodwill to visiting foreigners . . . and then shut up his lean-to office for the afternoon and talked politics and California and Europe over steins of thin beer. Very different from Great Portland Street—in every way.

Very different, too, that evening when, instead of leaving New York as we had planned, we were held up until the next day over some formality of a licence. We had left our rooms, carted our cases up to the Bronx, loaded them on the car. The Italian laughed at our suggestion of a hotel

"Why waste your dough? I'll fix you up . . ." He led us to large saloon cars at the back of the lot, pulled the seats forward, sent a negro boy for blankets and cushions, and waved triumphantly. "What do you think of that, boys? Campin' out in the Bronx, huh?"

And after a comfortable and free night on the Bronx lot, came coffee, razors and towels, also free, and a farewell committee on the sidewalk to cheer us off on what they considered our crazy errand. It's all part of the American service.

Driving *in* New York is hellish. Traffic lights control every crossing, but not every crossing has a light. So at each one you must look ahead maybe a hundred yards and try to pick a red (or green) traffic light out of a blaze of neon signs. Even its position varies. It may be to right, to left, on a mid-street standard or strung from overhead. And to cross against the red means a "ticket" and a fine.

Unless you're a foreigner, maybe. A motor-cycle cop picked us up after one light-crash, began writing a ticket and then pricked up his ears. "You boys from England? O.K, keep going and keep your eyes open. I'm from Sunderland. Know it?"

Driving *out* of New York is perfect—if you take one of the Parkways. You turn clear out of roaring city traffic into a broad concrete road, smoothly curving through unspoiled, natural woodlands.

No crossings (but "over-and-under" intersections), no ribbon building or houses or signs or commercial traffic or bicycles. But a swift, fifty m.p.h. sweep driving straight for miles out of the city. A sudden jump into the green luxuriant American country. Compare these Parkways—the greatest monuments to the foresight of the U.S. traffic authorities—with Acton and the Great Worst Road !

Even right outside New York you can drive along the same wide roads for miles at a time without slowing down from sixty or seventy for an occasional crossing, sweeping safely round banked bends. On such roads, which exist in most States across the continent, we found it quite untiring to average fifty m.p.h. for hours on end and, in dull country, to drive 500 miles in a day.

But we had planned to take it easy, with an average of 200 miles every day and frequent stop-offs for meals, drinks, bathing in the frequent roadhouse pools; even an occasional dance.

And this we did. Most nights we put up in one of the hundreds of auto-camps which now line all America's roads. These camps range from groups of a dozen rather ramshackle bungalows and a garage, to huge "wayside towns," with wide parking avenues, flower-filled shops, gardens, bathing and dancing, restaurants, and pleasant one-room houses, each with kitchen and bathroom. Cost? From fifty cents to a dollar a night, and garage free.

Nowadays most of the United State's huge roaming population puts up at these camps rather than in city hotels. In them we met many pleasant people—tourists like ourselves, including English, German and Scandinavian, American holiday-makers, commercial travellers, students, retired people, transient workers following the crops . . . and with English restraint 3,000 miles away, you make friends.

You drop into your neighbour's cabin as a matter of course and compare road notes over a rye-and-ginger ale; you meet in the shops or dining-hall. I have a wallet full of cards now, each given with an invitation to "call right in if you're ever in Tootsville, Pa, and we mean that."

At first it seems strange, but their friendliness is so infectious that, after a fortnight one loosens up and the memory of long, silent English train journeys seems far stranger.

America, nowadays, is a nation-on-wheels. They have even built homes-on-wheels and called them trailers (caravans to us). To-day there are half a million trailers in circulation, ranging from twelve-foot cabins on two wheels, with two berths, one cupboard, and an oil-stove, which a baby car can pull and which cost £50, to "super land yachts" thirty feet long, with several rooms, electric light, gas cooking, radios, built-in furniture and air-conditioning.

Hundreds of thousands of people make their permanent homes—rent- and tax-free—in these trailers and roam the country in search of the sun. We met many of them—mostly retired couples, or lucky workers like painters or novelists, who can live anywhere.

The usual plan is to drive until you find an ideal parking place—in a shady wood, maybe, near a fresh stream for water and fishing and a farmhouse for food—stay there until you need change, and then move on. An ideal life and cheap.

We met one couple, a retired schoolmaster and his wife, whose 25-footer, two-room trailer we towed for some miles when their car broke down.

"We're as comfortable here as we were in our five-room house in Brooklyn and we never intend to live in a house again," the man told me.

Once we slept the night in a large trailer, when our car broke down in pouring rain miles from anywhere. A young trailer-owning couple drew up, asked what the trouble was, and then insisted on parking their wheeled home by the roadside and pulling down the folding berths in the "guest room" for us.

Next morning, with the sun streaming into the spacious cabin, and berths folded away, we breakfasted off eggs and bacon and waffles and steaming coffee, prepared in the miniature kitchen.

The second and last time we had trouble, a passing motorist willingly towed us ten miles to the next garage. American road users are like that.

So, for twenty long, contented days we rolled across the continent; through mild, English-looking country, through oil fields where thousands of derricks had swept away the trees, through rolling-wheatlands, through "Black Country" round the steel towns, up 10,000-feet mountain passes, where the snow lingered and we slept in log cabins with huge iron stoves going all night, into California's Death Valley where the stifling heat touched 107 degrees and undulating sand dunes made a miniature Sahara.

We sped through hundreds of patriotic, little towns, many with a banner saying: "Welcome Folk ! This is Blankville, population 5,000—and 50,000 in Ten Years !

We saw Indian settlements, and bears lumbering through woods, and once (a thrill, this) two mounted cowboys, with shaggy trousers and guns on hips.

We helped dozens of hitch-hikers, thumbing their way towards the magic goal of California (including one pleasant young fellow, whose picture we later saw in a paper stamping him as a minor gangster who'd just helped hold up a country bank). And we met youths in ten-dollar, rattling fords, working at any old chores along the way in return for odd gallons of petrol.

We slept most nights at auto-camps. But, thanks to letters of introduction to local Rotary Clubs which we had been given in Montreal, we sometimes slept in feather beds, too. For each letter we presented, several friendly business men came forward and competed to take us to their homes and put us up for as long as we wished, and keep us up all night talking about England.

Twenty glorious days, which it would take many articles to describe fully, and one especially glorious day when we drove on to a winding road with its edges almost lapped by the blue wavelets of the Pacific.

And so through the metropolitan roar of Los Angeles, out to that sprawling suburb which seems the goal of half the world—Hollywood.

Was it worth it? I'll say it was ! Our total transport expenses from England to Hollywood (including the cost of the car, which we later sold for only five dollars less than it cost) came to slightly under £25, and we were living and eating more cheaply than we should have done in England.

But, you say, wait a minute ! There's one snag. What about getting home to England? You're right. That was a bit of a snag and it had to be paid for. That is why I am writing this article.


MIDSUMMER MADNESS

**Was Boy Mat quite as simple as he looked ? Why did the Wise Woman of the Marshlands take him under her care ? You must not miss**

**MIDSUMMER NIGHT**

**by**

**S. L. BENSUSAN**

NEXT WEEK

**SHORT SHORT STORY complete on this page of a man who suddenly forgot in a very big way**

# NOT QUITE SO DUMB

## BY DANA BURNET

ILLUSTRATED BY BERTRAM PRANCE

AT six o'clock of a fine summer morning, Max Lieberman awoke in the bedroom of his suite de luxe on board the White Star liner, *Queen Elizabeth*, one day out of New York bound for Southampton. As always on waking, the first thing that Mr. Lieberman did was to glance across at the other twin bed, in which his wife lay sleeping. The sight of Mama's kindly, seamed face, pressed into the pillow, the familiar topography of the bedclothes heaped about her plump, maternal figure, brought peace and reassurance to his soul. For forty-six years, from the days of his first nickelodeon theatre on the Bowery, to his present eminence as president of the great Calumet Pictures Corporation in Hollywood, Max Lieberman had loved and worshipped Mama. He was happy, now, thinking of the three months' European vacation that lay ahead of them.

"It don't seem natural. I should be worrying about something," he said, aloud, to the sea-gull that soared past his window.

And then—

His mind tossed up a phantom memory to plague him. He recalled, suddenly, that just before leaving the studio in Hollywood to start on his vacation with Mama, he had written an important memorandum on the scratch pad on his desk. What was it, now? He tried to think; and at once there began in his brain a kind of chase, in which his consciousness vainly pursued that elusive memorandum.

"Papa, for heaven's sakes, what are you doing? You should not be standing there catching pneumonia in your nightgown!"

Max Lieberman turned to see Mama's anxious face lifted from the pillow. He smiled at her and his own rather grotesquely-sculptured face took on a sudden, incongruous sweetness. "Good morning, Mama. It's okay. I wouldn't catch cold from this warm breeze." Then a slight frown furrowed the space between his eyebrows. "But I'm worried about something."

"Heaven's sakes!" Mama said, sighing. "We hardly get on the ocean and already you start worrying. What is it, Papa?"

He told her. Crossing the cabin, he sat down on the edge of her bed and told her about the forgotten item on his desk back in Hollywood.

"It must have been something important or I wouldn't have made a memorandum of it," he concluded, unhappily.

"What can you do?"

"I could send a radio to Abe Graubert in Hollywood. He can go look on my desk at the studio and——"

"Wait a minute," Mama said, putting a restraining hand on his arm. She did some rapid mental calculating.

"It's only three o'clock or maybe four in the morning in Hollywood. And it's Sunday, too. Abe Graubert would think you were getting foolish in your old age to call him out of bed so early on Sunday morning for nothing."

"For nothing? Here I'm worrying my head off and you say it's for nothing?" cried the harassed president of Calumet Pictures.

Mrs. Lieberman's heart melted, as always, at the sight of his dejected, troubled face. She thought hard for a moment.

"Listen, Papa. Why don't you call up London by wireless phone? It ain't daylight yet in Hollywood but already it's ten or eleven o'clock in London. You could call the manager of your office there at his home address, and talk to him.

Max stared at her.

"Why," he demanded, "should I call up London?"

"Well," said Mama. "It always does you good to talk on the long-distance telephone. You could tell the London manager what you wanted and he could call up Abe Graubert, later on, in Hollywood and take the whole thing off your mind. Then you could just relax till you get a radio report here on the ship."

"I'll do it," said Mr. Lieberman. He got up and trotted off briskly in the direction of the ship's wireless room. Half an hour later, he returned, looking much happier. "I called London," he stated, beaming, "and got the manager. He's going to call Abe Graubert and handle the whole business for me. I'll maybe get a radio from Abe, in Hollywood, by noon-time. Come on, Mama. Let's play shuffle-board."

Almost at noon exactly, a page-boy handed Max Lieberman a radiogram. But it wasn't from Abe Graubert in Hollywood. It was from the London manager saying that Mr. Graubert was reported to be at Big Bear Lake for the week-end and that it was doubtful if he could be contacted immediately.

"So!" said Mr. Lieberman, leaning heavily on his shuffle-board stick. "Here I am stuck in the middle of the ocean, with that memorandum on my mind, which I can't remember and I can't forget. And Abe Graubert is at Big Bear Lake, probably fishing! It's terrific."

"Oh, now, Papa—for heaven's sake—" began his wife, protestingly. But by this time Max was completely out of control. He was possessed, haunted by a worry that had grown suddenly to monumental proportions. His chest swelled. His eyes snapped. He became the efficient executive handling a difficult and highly complicated situation.

"I'm going to call up Hollywood, myself," he declared, loudly. "I'll call up my secretary, Miss Green! I'll call up London and tell them not to bother with Abe Graubert, the fisherman! You wait and see, Mama. I ain't president of Calumet Pictures for nothing. You wait and see. It's terrific," repeated the colossus of Hollywood, and stalked rapidly away on his second visit to the wireless room.

"For heaven's sake," murmured Mama, resignedly.

So, on that sunny afternoon, as the S.S *Queen Elizabeth* steamed majestically into the blue of the east, the wonders of the wireless were invoked and the excited voice of Max Lieberman was projected across space from continent to continent. Mr. Lieberman called London and told the manager there to forget Abe Graubert, the fisherman. Mr. Lieberman called Miss Green in Hollywood and was informed that Miss Green was in the Good Samaritan Hospital having her tonsils out. Mr. Lieberman called the Calumet studio, was answered by a frightened watchman and told the watchman exactly what he wanted. "I'll hold the phone," shouted Mr. Lieberman.

"Y-yes, sir," stammered the frightened watchman, four thousand miles away.

Mr. Lieberman, perspiring profusely, held the ship's phone while the watchman in Hollywood went to look in the president's office for a little white desk-pad with a pencilled memorandum written on it. Finally the watchman's report came quaveringly over land and sea. "There ain't no pad on your desk, sir. Maybe it's in the drawer, but the desk is locked and I ain't got the key."

"Smash open the desk!" cried Mr. Lieberman into the radio phone.

Unexpectedly, he encountered in the lowly watchman an obstacle that was nothing short of maddening.

"That's a carpenter's job, sir. I'd get in trouble with the union if I done a carpenter's work, sir."

"So!" shrieked Mr. Lieberman. "I can't get my own desk smashed in? Listen, you dumbhead! I want you to call Mr. Sam Gold, head of the personnel department. Tell him to get a carpenter and pay him overtime, if he can't help it, to open that desk of mine. Tell Mr. Gold to send me a radio to the ship, the minute he finds that scratch-pad. I got to know what's written on that pad before I bust my blood-pressure, you understand me?"

He put up the receiver. He wiped the sweat from his expansive forehead. He staggered down to his cabin de luxe, where Mama was lying down, taking her afternoon rest.

"It's terrific!" croaked the great movie executive and fell exhausted on his own bed.

He slept. He had no intention of sleeping but, nevertheless, his heroic efforts to retrieve that forgotten memorandum had taken their toll of his strength and he slept. Mama, thankful for this blessing of nature, closed her eyes and napped peacefully on her bed beside him.

They were awakened by a knock on the door of their suite. Mr. Lieberman sprang up and opened the door. A page-boy handed him a radiogram. With shaking fingers, Max opened it. A sudden light dawned on his face, to be followed swiftly by a look of vast relief. Happily, he tipped the boy, who vanished, closing the door behind him.

"Let me see it," said Mama, from her bed.

Max walked slowly across the room and handed her the radiogram. Mama sat up and read it aloud.

"BROKE OPEN DESK FOUND MEMO PAD IN DRAWER WITH MESSAGE YOUR HANDWRITING AS FOLLOWS QUOTE BUY NIGHTSHIRT IN LONDON UNQUOTE BEST REGARDS.

"SAM GOLD."

For a moment, silence reigned in the Liebermans' suite de luxe on the good ship *Queen Elizabeth*. Then Mama exploded.

"So!" she cried. "You took all this trouble, you called up people from both sides of the ocean, you worried yourself half sick—and all on account of what? Just so you wouldn't forget to buy yourself a new nightshirt in London, which you don't need, anyway, because you got plenty of them. I'm not speaking to you, Papa!"

"No?" said Max, grinning. "You ain't speaking to me? Well, listen, Mama. Nightshirt is the name of a new English play that's opening next week in London. I had a private report on it the day I left Hollywood. The report said it was terrific. So I ain't such a fool, or I wouldn't be president of Calumet Pictures."

Mama stared at him; and then, with a sound not unlike that of escaping steam, fell back against her pillows.

"Forty-six years I been married to you," she said, sighing, "and still it's a surprise to me that you ain't as dumb as you look!"

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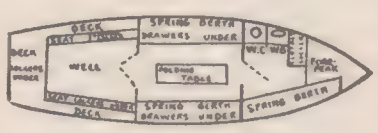


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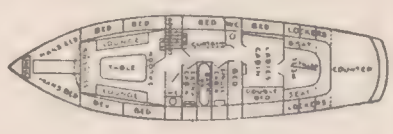


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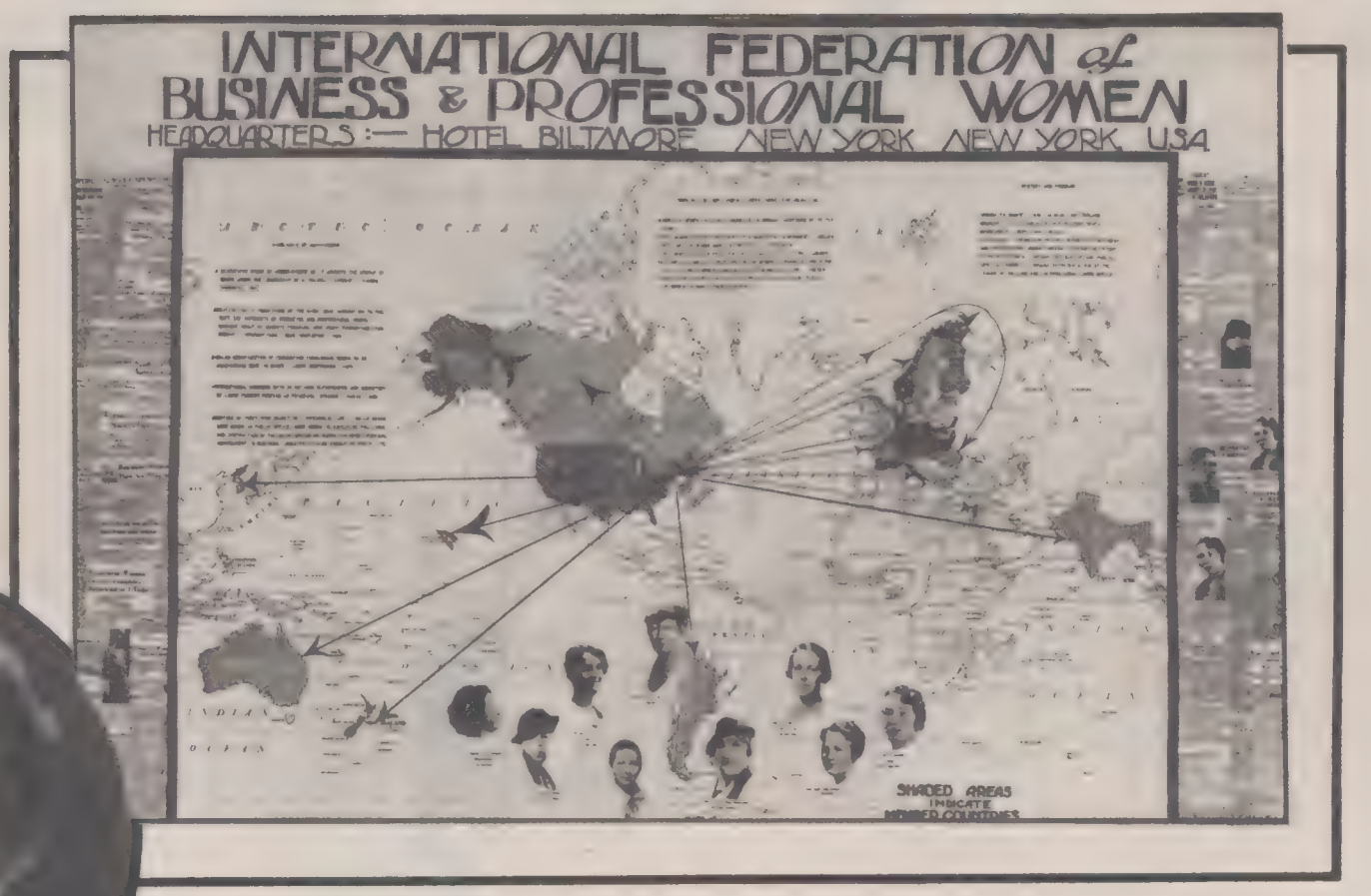



Miss Longstreth: "The idea is to have small clubs, each independent and governing itself. . . . Once I had a few names I went and interviewed the girls, personally. Then we arranged a title meeting and, when enough members had been gathered, the club started"

# SPEAKING UP FOR THEMSELVES

**Women from all parts of the world meet in Budapest this week, to attend the five-day meeting of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, held every second year, always in a different country**

## BY DAPHNE CLARE

PROBABLY you did not know that the business women of twenty-five countries have their own federation. Well, that is not surprising. It came into existence only in 1930 and, although it has done a good deal to help women in many countries, it has been working quietly and unobtrusively without getting into the limelight.

Its object is to help women in their careers; to help young women to establish themselves; to help the established to become organised. Membership alone is an introduction to leading women in business and the professions in the principal foreign countries, which is very valuable to a woman travelling abroad.

Started eight years ago by a small group of women in the United States, it has now spread round the world. Women earning their own living in Korea, Palestine, India, Argentine, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Australia, the Scandinavian countries and a dozen others, have joined—more than a hundred thousand of them—and they are all sending representatives to Hungary.

The headquarters of this pioneer movement is in New York, but it preserves an international character by splitting up its "officers" among as many nations as possible.

The president, Miss Lena Madesin Phillip, one of the founders, is American. There are four vice-presidents. One is Italian, Dr. Maria Castellani; the second is English, Miss Caroline Haslett, the engineer; the third is Miss Dorothy Heneker, Canadian; and the fourth is Senator F. F. Plaminkov of Czechoslovakia.

The corresponding secretary lives in Norway. She writes all the letters, sends out invitations, attends to registrations of delegates and summons the committee to the meeting held each year in which there is no general conference. The recording secretary lives in Poland. Her job is to keep all records, minutes of meetings and records of past work. She will be responsible for keeping full accounts of what is done during the Budapest meeting. The treasurer is in the United States, but the financial policy is controlled in London by Miss Gordon Holmes, well known in the city. These offices are, of course, voluntary.

In eight years the Federation has done a great deal to help women in a practical way. For instance, in the States, in 1934, it found jobs for five thousand members who were facing unemployment.

The Federation has 60,000 members in the States and, because of that, the work done there has been on a large scale. Business women have contributed £100,000 to help 15,000 girls educate themselves for a career.

They have also recently succeeded in getting a new law repealed. When the Government decreed that no married women should be employed in any of its departments, the Federation decided that this might be a forerunner to banning married women from all work outside the home.

So, right across the continent from coast to coast, members raised their voices in protest. In a few months the new law was taken off the statute book.

It was probably one of the biggest victories in the history of women's emancipation, won solely by the organised opinion of the rank and file of women. It shows what typists, clerks, shop girls and teachers can do for themselves and for each other, when they band together.

The British Federation of Business and Professional Women was formed only three years ago. It now has 12,000 members. That gives some idea of the speed with which the movement is spreading. But this body of international women feel that the possibilities of Great Britain have only been touched.

Moreover, they feel that large British membership would add considerable prestige to the world status of the organisation.

So two months ago it was decided, in New York, that Miss Zonola Longstreth, a prominent lawyer, should come over here to organise business women's clubs.

She is, of course, at Budapest for the conference. When that is over she will return to England to organise more clubs. She will then concentrate on the provinces, starting with Nottingham.

She is called European field representative, and she is determined to prove to English girls what a help it is to have business friends who are not in the same office—not necessarily in the same line of business.

If you judge by results, I should say Miss Longstreth has the true American go-getter spirit. She got down to the job as soon as she arrived and within three weeks had two clubs organised in London. One is for girls working in the city; the other for those working in Westminster. In the same short space two other clubs were in process of being formed.

The plan is simple. It is not intended to appeal to women in industrial pursuits. They are already served by their trade unions. The clubs are meant for the large section of women employed in business and the smaller sections in the professions who are, for the most part, unorganised. Entrance fee is fixed at 10s. 6d. and the subscription is 10s. 6d. a year.

There is no attempt to provide club premises. The aim is rather for a group to meet purely in a friendly way for lunch, or dinner, if that is more suitable. Here the girls will meet others with the same or similar problems in their work.

Sometimes, too, women who have already succeeded will come and give friendly talks. Members will be kept informed of what women are doing in other countries through the headquarters in New York.

All this helps to inspire the young girl who is starting out. When she hears what other women have done she feels that perhaps she can achieve something, too. For instance, it is not generally known that in America a woman is director of the mint.

Three women sit in the upper house of the Danish Parliament, which is equivalent to our House of Lords. Also, there are women judges in Denmark.

Women have an exceptionally high standing in business in Norway. Nearly thirty-five thousand of them have important executive jobs in State departments. Recently they obtained a new law making it compulsory for employers to give the same hours and working conditions to women as to men and, also, to give women equal pay for equal work.

# ELIZABETH TRIES A GETAWAY

**Pert, Cockney serving maid, heroine of a thousand amusing adventures, tires of being the leading lady of the lost tribe of Mtangulizi, for the state banquets left her with a hangover that even Rusty Brown, wandering American, could not cure**

BY FLORENCE A. KILPATRICK

ILLUSTRATED BY GILBERT WILKINSON

They found the boat without any difficulty and, in silence, rowed to the opposite bank

I WON'T be a bird in a gilded cage no longer!" declared Elizabeth.

Neither Henry nor Netta felt inclined to laugh at this remark—incongruous as it seemed, coming from Elizabeth. Over her pert, Cockney features, gloom had settled; her lank form in its toga-like silk garment drooped. That the lost tribe of Mtangulizi should have rendered homage to her, solely because she had accidentally become the owner of the sacred Ju-Ju, no longer seemed fantastic. The love of power that had mounted so rapidly to her head had departed, leaving her full of apprehension regarding her fate.

"I'm orf . . . you don't get me to stay 'ere no longer," she went on in the tone she might have employed when giving a month's notice to an unsatisfactory mistress. "Any place would be better than this."

"I'm inclined to agree with Elizabeth," said Megan. The usually optimistic Irishman seemed for once without enthusiasm.

The party was gathered in Rusty Brown's bungalow, in order, as Henry put it, "to hold a council of war" . . . though a peaceful escape was uppermost in their minds just then. "There must be some way out," he added.

"Aw, you're all nuts." Rusty Brown paused in the act of rolling a cigarette and shrugged his shoulders half contemptuously. Then, dramatically, he indicated the scene that spread before them, framed in the verandah . . . the beauty of the fertile Sacred Valley of Thahabu, the winding river, sparkling in the sunshine, the flowering trees, the birds of gaily coloured plumage, the orange groves and great clumps of exotic, heavily perfumed blooms. "Get an eyeful of that," he commanded, "and say, is there any place in the world that can beat it . . ."

"It's orl right for you . . . the cannibals and 'eathens that run this 'appy 'ome don't want to make any sacrifice o' you," snapped Elizabeth.

"We must get away before they hold their ritual feasts," declared Henry.

"I should worry," commented Rusty. "I guess that's a great deal easier said than done."

"Surely you're with us in this desire to get away from here. You ought to know enough of these people to be aware that you're living in false security." As he spoke, Megan walked up and down in agitation. "You've dwelt three years in the valley. If there are possibilities of escape you must surely know of them. Look here, Brown, you must help us. Hang it all, man, we ought to stick together in this. We belong to the same race . . . we've got to pull together."

"Oh, yeah?" Rusty Brown rose from the table where he had been rolling cigarettes and confronted them, his lean, freckled face paler than usual. "Listen, folks. You came here of your own free will, I reckon. You sure weren't invited and I, for one, wish you'd durned well kept away. What the natives want to do with you ain't my affair."

"But it is your affair," said Henry. "Whatever their designs on us may be—you can assume that you will share our fate."

"Nerts. I've got the lowdown on these guys and I know how to manage them. And supposin' I play up to your little game . . . join you in making a getaway . . . what's waiting for me on the other side? The woild as you and I know it . . . work . . . an' I don't like work. Worry . . . I ain't any fonder of that than you are——"

"There's freedom."

"Freedom . . . *boloney*. If there's any freedom in civilisation I ain't noticed it so far. Listen, folks. Ever since I was a kid, I been brought up tough.

What I got to know of life I picked up on the sidewalks of Chicago. I've been in some queer jobs . . . lotta risk to most of them and durned little dough. I never got the kick outa life that I wanted. When my plane crashed in this valley I reckoned the time had come to put paid to my account . . . with nothing to show for it. I guess you know the rest. I've dug myself in here pretty snug. I've got guys to work for me, janes to wait on me, I live in the finest climate outside of heaven . . . in short, I'm getting just one lovely time. Now you folk come along and say I've gotta get out just because you feel like it . . . because we're white and the natives are yellow. Aw, come off it. If you think you're going to get me to quit, you're bats!" Here Rusty spat; this being his most expressive way of concluding an argument.

There was something so convincing in his delivery of this ultimatum, rather than the actual words, that no one attempted to contest the point further. After a long pause, Megan remarked:

"Then as you don't intend to throw in your lot with us . . ."

"I tell you I ain't coming in on this. If I did give you the lowdown and the chief got to know I'd helped you, I wouldn't give a nickel for my own chance of safety."

"You could pretend you didn't know anything about it," urged Netta. "After all, why should the natives assume that it would be any advantage to you if we disappeared? Please help us." She went up to Rusty and looked anxiously into his face. "If anything . . . happened to us here . . . I feel sure you would never settle down happily as before."

"Get this right away, you folks. I ain't going along with you. You know these native guys have a saying that if strangers come to the valley, they are not allowed to leave it. When I foist landed here I thought a whole lot about ways of escape and it looked to me as if the valley, because of what you might call its natural fortifications, was just a sort of trap. And then, quite by accident I came across the tunnel."

"Tunnel!" echoed Megan and Henry together.

"It lies to the west of the valley. I made notes of its exact position. It's on the other side of the river. When I foist questioned the native guys about it, they wouldn't spiel. But after I'd been here for a year or two and had settled down, like as if it was home, they loosened up and told me that the tunnel leads out of the Sacred Valley into what they call the big woild."

"What a marvellous piece of luck!" exclaimed Henry. "And such a simple solution to our problem."

"Simple nothing. It's guarded night and day. The natives have a saying that the guard has been unbroken for five hundred years. And so, you see, it ain't such an easy solution to your little trouble after all!"

Rusty laughed at the chagrin and disappointment reflected in the faces of the others.

"Aw, there's a way outa that," he added, more reasonably. "They're cunning, these natives, but I guess a white man can beat them in most things."

"When do you think would be the best time to make the attempt?" inquired Megan.

"Two nights from now they're going to have a big feast. Every man, woman and child in the valley joins in. Not that the guard is taken from the tunnel. But they work in shorter shifts, so that everyone can join in. The feast, itself, lasts until daybreak."

"It don't seem quite the right time to me to make an escape," objected Elizabeth. "If they're feastin' until the morning, this place will be about as quiet as Piccadilly on Boat Race night."

"Sez you. It ain't so much feasting as drinking, for the celebration is in honour of the vine. It's free drinks all round in this lil' home-town on that night. What you gotta do is to pretend to get sozzled, or they'll take it badly. These guys are hospitable. You gotta hand it to them."

"But . . . but must we go to the feast?" Netta looked bewildered.

"Sure. You're going to be the Big Noise." He looked at Elizabeth. "When the party gets well going it might be a good stunt if you pretend to be taken ill. Go all out for symptoms and ask the chief if you can leave."

"And I can go, too, after making the excuse that I want to look after Elizabeth," suggested Netta.

"Sure. Then you two other guys won't be far behind. You must all meet at my bungalow here. That's the safest, as it will be deserted that night. I'll have everything ready that you're likely to require."

"W'y, you ain't so bad after all," declared Elizabeth, bluntly. "I've 'eard it said that there's lots o' good in the worst of us, an' now I know."

"And let me tell you, Smarty, that I wouldn't be doing all this if it wasn't to make sure you'd be going for good," was Rusty's laconic reply. "There isn't room for two like us in this happy valley."

The others exchanged anxious glances, alarmed lest their ally should take offence. But, having given his word, it soon became evident that Rusty was to be relied upon. At his suggestion, they kept away from his bungalow, and held little converse with him during the two days following, in case, later on, he should be suspected of aiding them to escape.

It soon appeared as if every inhabitant of the Sacred Valley was taking part in the preparation of the forthcoming celebration.

"A party's orl very well, but it seems to me that they take a lot o' trouble over things that ain't necessary," reflected Elizabeth, as she watched the young maidens of the tribe garlanding the Sacred Bulls with roses. Even less necessary than this display did she consider the hanging of chains of gold about the necks of the Sacred Rams. Out of this spectacle an idea occurred to her. The Sacred Valley, abounding with objects fashioned in gold, with every kind of precious stone, could well provide her with a fortune, when she took her departure and escaped through the tunnel.

Cautiously she began to examine the jewellery that had been placed at her disposal when she first came to Thahabu.

In a large chest of ivory, inlaid with gold, were enough precious stones to provide a regalia. Elizabeth considered the enormous stones with some awe.

"Trouble is, if I wear these at 'ome I'll never get anyone to believe they're reel," she decided. It was a saddening thought. After some hesitancy she made a selection of rubies, sapphires and diamonds.

"Red, white an' blue for ole England," she said, stirred by patriotism and nostalgia, alike. The fear that had oppressed her ever since she had entered the gruesome cave beyond the Ju-Ju Temple began to diminish as the hour of deliverance approached.

The Feast of the Vine appeared to be as important a celebration as the one in which Elizabeth had previously figured. As a special mark of honour to her, as Keeper of the Sacred Ju-Ju, she was given a place at the right hand of the chief. He was magnificently arrayed for the occasion, with a massive gold chain about his neck and a coronet of rubies on his dusky hair. His guard of honour and all the women present, also wore rubies.

"It is our custom to wear the wine-red stone at the Feast of the Vine," he explained to Elizabeth, "and also for that other celebration . . . the sacrifice of blood."

"Reely? That's . . . that's very nice," stammered Elizabeth, suddenly conscious of a cold feeling down her spine. "You're f-fond o' givin' do's . . . er . . . parties, I mean, here, ain't you?"

"Sure," replied the Chief. He regarded Elizabeth with a genial expression. "You settled down here all right? My folk looking after you okay?"

The sight of the chief, more majestic than usual, in his garments of silk and crown of rubies, yet speaking in the easy slang that had been taught to him by Rusty Brown suddenly appealed to Elizabeth's sense of humour and she laughed gustily.

"What's eatin' you?" he now inquired.

"Oh . . . nothink much."

"You look full of pep," he continued. "You ain't got no grouse since you came amongst us?"

"N-no . . . I'm very happy indeed here and you've orl been most kind," said Elizabeth, politely, while her heart sang at the thought that in a few hours she would have left the Sacred Valley for ever. She had no wish to take part in the next celebration that would be marked by the wearing of blood-red rubies.

During the festivities, Elizabeth only made a pretence of drinking the wine that was so frequently offered to her. Many times, as the evening advanced, did she catch Netta's eyes and, at a given signal from her, she gave a moan and flung herself back in her seat.

"I'm feelin' ill," she gasped. "Somethink's upset me . . . it must 'ave been the peacocks' tongues. I never could stand many o' them." She rose to her feet "If you don't mind, chief, I'll go and lie down."

In the momentary confusion that followed, Elizabeth played her part well. Tottering amongst a group of dancing maidens who were entertaining the guests, she staggered out of the hall, attended by Netta and various serving girls. Once in her own apartments, Elizabeth asked to be alone . . . except for Netta who, with an air of marked solicitude, seated herself beside her on the couch while the servants withdrew.

(*please turn over*)

"Well, I think that went off orl right," said Elizabeth, with a sigh of relief, when the others had departed. "When do we start escaping, please, 'm?"

This reference to their flight . . . as if it were a gas leak . . . sounded strangely unheroic. But Netta, abstracted and anxious, murmured:

"We must wait for half an hour before we go to Rusty's bungalow. The others will join us there."

Megan and Henry were awaiting them when they arrived. Both outwardly calm and reliant, their manner did much to soothe the nervous fears of the two women.

"Rusty has left all instructions with me," explained Megan. "We are to go along the banks of the river to a point he has indicated, where we shall find a boat waiting us. It contains provisions and all that is necessary for the journey."

"Provisions!" echoed Netta. "Will it take us long to get through the Tunnel?"

"Rusty says it takes a winding route and that he has never been able to find out any real estimate of the distance. It may take us some days."

"Wot . . . are we goin' to be in that there tunnel for days?" asked Elizabeth, now apprehensive. "I never did like tunnels, even when I'm in a train."

"Well, you must make up your mind to like this tunnel," said Megan briskly, "as we may see quite a lot of it before we leave it."

They set out cautiously, taking a road that skirted the village, and, as all the natives were celebrating, they did not encounter anyone. They found the boat without any difficulty and, in silence, rowed to the opposite bank. Here the men unloaded the provisions, two lanterns and the large stock of the clumsy native candles, which would be so necessary to guide them through the darkness of the tunnel.

"Now to take our bearings," said Megan. "That tall pine tree is our landmark. We must stand beneath it, facing east . . . take forty steps forward, go down a sharp declivity that will bring us to a path, directly facing the tunnel. I'll go ahead and check up on Rusty's instructions."

He was absent for nearly fifteen minutes and when he returned, his manner showed suppressed excitement.

"I've found the entrance to the tunnel," he announced. "Two natives were guarding it . . . but they have apparently been drugged. Wonder how Rusty managed it. He certainly left nothing to chance. Everything is going marvellously."

After having hidden the boat in some bushes—according to Rusty's orders—the men divided the load between them, handing the lanterns to Netta and Elizabeth. The entrance to the tunnel was low, narrow and somewhat concealed by the tangled foliage and blossoms of the bougainvillea.

It was an eerie journey. The path widened as they advanced and the subdued light from the lanterns showed that the walls were glistening with moisture, the arched formation of the roof suggesting that the tunnel was fashioned by linking a series of caves. For over an hour, they walked in silence, each meditating on the distress and discomfort of a journey in the dark that might last for days.

"Rusty said that there is no fear of our being pursued," Henry said, reassuringly, to the two women. "All the natives know of the tunnel, but they are forbidden to enter it. Also, they have a superstition that to go beyond their Sacred Valley of Thahabu means death."

Elizabeth shuddered. "I only 'ope it doesn't mean death to us as well. I know I'm feeling ready to drop dead with fatigue orlready."

Despite this complaint, Megan did not call a halt until they all declared themselves too weary to go farther. Luckily, they had arrived at a cave much larger than the rest. The floor was dry and sandy and here they set down their packs, which they unfastened by the light of the two lanterns. After a meal of bread, wine and fruit, it was decided that Megan and Henry should take it in turns to keep watch while the others slept. Fur wraps had been put in the boat, ostensibly for the women, and as Elizabeth enfolded herself in its comforting warmth before settling down to sleep, she was aware of a surge of gratitude towards Rusty for this humane and kindly thought.

"'E ain't so bad after orl," she decided. "Wish now I'd told him that before I left. Anyhow, I won't never set eyes on 'im again."

It seemed to Elizabeth that she had scarcely closed her eyes on this reflection before she was being violently shaken while Netta's voice in her ear was commanding her to wake up.

"Wake up. I've scarcely been to sleep yet," she said in aggrieved tones.

"You've had five hours," remarked Megan. "All that can be allowed on this march. We must have a snack and push along immediately."

His tone was brisk, but it held a note of concern. They had enough food and wine to last them two days. Fresh water, as Rusty had predicted, was to be found in the caves and already, in making a voyage of discovery as the others slept, he had found a source of water, brackish, but pure. This had relieved his mind on one score, but anxiety as to what arid or trackless spot they might arrive at on emerging from the tunnel troubled him. They might find themselves in a remote corner of the Great Rift Valley, unarmed, wholly unprepared for a journey to some place of safety.

When all was in readiness, the party set out again in depressed silence. The continual darkness affected them all far more than the roughest and most difficult march. For one thing, they were more conscious of danger as they peered ahead, striving to pierce the shadows and dreading what might lurk beyond. Suddenly Megan exclaimed excitedly. "Look ahead!"

In a flash their spirits rose, murmurs of delight and relief broke from them all. For a faint glimmer of light could be distinguished beyond.

"Thank God . . . the end of the journey," said Netta.

"Now it's about over, I don't mind admittin' I was fair gettin' the wind up," remarked Elizabeth.

They pressed forward eagerly. Elizabeth even broke into a run. It was she who was the first to discover the reason for that unexpected glimmer of light in the tunnel.

"This don't look like the end of the journey," she announced, in tones of bitter disappointment. "The light comes from a crack in the roof."

A fissure in the rocky formation of the roof actually gave a glimpse of tropical sky; a shaft of sunlight even penetrated into the tunnel. Despite the chagrin they felt, the sight of that shaft of sunlight so heartened them that, unanimously, they called a halt and sat down for a frugal meal.

They drank the last of the wine they had brought with them, "as a toast to the sun" as Megan expressed it . . . and smoked some of the cigarettes Rusty Brown had so thoughtfully provided. For the first time Netta was able to observe a bundle which Elizabeth was holding, and casually she inquired what it contained.

"Them's me jewels," replied Elizabeth, proudly. "I brought them with me. I mean to get somethink back for orl I 'ad to put up with in that there valley . . . thinkin' every moment was goin' to be my last."

"Jewels," echoed Netta. "Why, I never thought of that . . . my one idea was to get away with our lives."

"Our lives will be better worth living with somethink like this to make things easier." Elizabeth unrolled the bundle as she spoke.

"Good lord, look at the size of those stones. Why, Elizabeth, when you sell them you'll have enough money for a king's ransom."

"Shouldn't know wot to do with a king's ransom if I 'ad one," she replied. "I got other ideers."

"Wish I'd thought of bringing some of the ornaments they lent me," said Netta, enviously.

"There, 'm, there's enough for you as well." Elizabeth waved her hand with a lordly gesture.

"I know I've planned to 'ave a rare old beano when I gets 'ome."

"If and when we do get home," said Megan, brusquely, rising to his feet. "This is no time to indulge in day-dreams. We must be getting along."

This was so unlike the optimistic Irishman that the others looked at him in surprise. Megan, indeed, was scarcely able to account for this mood of foreboding that possessed him.

Regretfully, the party turned its back on the welcome beams of light; after such a respite, the darkness seemed even more impenetrable, the wall more dank and slimy to the touch. As they advanced, the air was perceptibly colder. Feeling something gliding across her foot, Elizabeth sprang back to see a shiny form wriggling away; whereupon she sent up a scream that reverberated through the tunnel.

"It was a snake," she gasped as the others rallied round her. "The 'orror of it . . . an' if it's bitten me I'll be dead in forty minnits . . . I've read orl about snakes."

"Don't be a fool, Elizabeth," said Henry firmly. "It's too cold down here for snakes. You must have imagined it."

"I ain't started imagining anythink yet, sir . . . there's enough 'orrors down here orlready without thinking of any."

The episode had also shaken Netta and it was obvious that the two women were in a condition of nerves. They refused to pause even for necessary rests, despite the entreaties of Henry and Megan. It was only when they were too exhausted to walk farther that they consented to take a few hours' respite. Netta was shivering as if with ague. She had evidently caught a chill in the dank coldness of the tunnel and, when they resumed the march again, seemed too weak to make much progress.

"We must carry her between us, Henry," said Megan. "Elizabeth, go first with the lantern, and take what you can of our load. We mustn't delay. Every minute is of importance in case the food gives out."

Elizabeth, walking ahead, directing the beams of the lantern to the floor in order to evade further encounters with "snakes," meditated sadly on the straits to which a passion for travel could bring a girl. If she got out of this alive, never, never again would she undertake any journey without the return half of a ticket in her purse. Oh, to be safe in England . . . in good old London, with its buses and tubes and picture houses and shops——

"Hello, what's that?" exclaimed Henry. He had paused and was pointing to the ground.

"It's a living branch," said Megan excitedly. "Leaves on it are still green."

"That means we are not far from the entrance," said Netta excitedly. The idea gave her a new spurt of energy and she insisted on walking, supported by Henry. Half an hour's journey brought them to a bend in the tunnel and then the blessed sight of daylight. They emerged into blazing sunshine and looked about them, blinking like owls, not able at first to take their bearings.

When their eyes had grown accustomed to the light, they discovered that they had emerged into a pleasant, fertile valley.

"We must be near a native village . . . there are evidences of cultivation," said Megan. "That's a man-made road. Let's follow it."

It led them by a tall, winding hedge of macapra and unexpectedly brought them in full view of a massive building, stalactiform, domed like a cathedral, exquisite in the delicate beauty of its carving. But at the sight of it, a gasp of horror broke from all of them.

"*We've got back to the Sacred Valley!*" exclaimed Netta and began to sob hysterically.

There came a sound of drums to their ears. The Chief, surrounded by his chosen attendants, appeared and came slowly towards them, smiling blandly, his hands stretched out in welcome.

"The old devil knew about our intention to escape all the time," said Megan. "He's far cuter than Rusty imagined him to be. Why, that tunnel is nothing but a diabolical joke of his . . . and a trap to discover if any of his subjects make attempts to leave Thahabu."

A snort of rage came from Elizabeth. "An' it was Rusty Brown 'oo sed that, no matter 'ow cunnin' the natives was, a white man could orlways beat 'em. Beat 'em, indeed! Wait till I sees Rusty Brown again. I'll . . . well, I'll claw 'im!"

NEXT WEEK

Learning the Language


## UNCLE MUNGO

"PULLS THE STRINGS"

**A dashing foreign Count—a shy, reserved Englishman—a duel to the death to win a lovely bride! And Uncle Mungo is master of Ceremonies! You'll enjoy this story by**

**B. L. JACOT**

**NEXT WEEK**

# MOSTLY WATER

Considering our wet blanket climate, it is surprising what a great deal there is to learn about $H_2O$.

BY DR. HAY-SCOTT

DESPITE the tendency, within recent years, for spells of drought to occur, and notwithstanding the blighted rainless spring of 1938, we shall never be allowed, in this island at any rate, to develop the finest thirst we ever knew. The wet blanket that is the cursed English climate will always remain.

There are two good and essential reasons why the inhabitants of Britain should not be allowed to forget how important water is to us, and the first is that it is very difficult to get away from it. Our country is like a piece of Europe broken off and allowed to drift far enough away from the mainland so that it is like a breakwater, receiving all the combers of the Atlantic Ocean with its thousands of miles of sea.

Secondly, there is the fact that, apart from being in a marine community, the abundance of normal rain associated with Britain allows us to see water brought to our very door, no matter where we may be. Thus, if we cannot spend our days in sight of waves lapping our shores, we can at least have the experience of soft rain, brought by the south-west wind from the moist Atlantic, beating down on our roof, or of melting sleet lashing our faces out of the north-east.

Undoubtedly we usually suffer from a surfeit of water, as the statistics of bronchitis, rheumatism and other similar diseases show, but whether regarded as an internal or as an external agent in our bodily economies and activities, water is of the greatest importance, and it is necessary that we should, at all times, make the best use of it.

First, there is the consideration of water in the normal physiological routine of human requirement. Secondly there is water as a therapeutic or curative agent.

Water used internally for ordinary purposes of life appears in various forms. Moisture is everything in living animals or plants. Take away the water from a muscle cell, or out of a turnip, and you are left with the flimsiest envelope of easily pulverised tissue, the latter without character or apparent strength.

The most solid-looking organ, e.g., a muscle, may be more than one-half composed of water; and fluids such as blood, lymph and the important juices secreted by the glands, contain a much bigger proportion of the blessed fluid. The main loss from the body is not in solid but in fluid form, that is to say solutions are formed to hold the unwanted salts of wastage. The three chief routes of fluid excretion are by the kidneys, the skin and the breath.

Normally the kidneys extract and disperse from two to three pints of water every twenty-four hours, while the skin accounts for a pint and a half, this taking the form of evaporated sweat. But, as is well known, more vigorous exercise may cause a temporary intensification of the perspiration mechanism, so that a further considerable weight may be got rid of.

This is the basis of many of the reducing exercises and it is the fundamental principle involved in the violent skipping sometimes required of the boxer in the last vital minutes before he steps on the scales and so makes the weight required of his class and of the fight that is ahead of him.

If water is so lavishly disposed of by the body, some constant replenishment is surely necessary. Fluids are introduced into the human framework by the foodstuffs and beverages we take. And, when it is considered that at least three pints of water are required every day by the body when the latter is undergoing the minimum of exercise in cold weather, we can readily appreciate why it is that great thirst follows violent exercise, or any other state in which sweating is at its maximum.

Thirst is a sensation proceeding from deeply rooted centres that act like telegraph stations. It is a strange and wonderful thing that very pressing thirst may assail us despite the fact that there may be very little shortage in the tissues themselves. Nature has a way of sending out the S O S long before there is any real danger. There is often a very proper reason, therefore, for participation in a pint of beer or water or milk. The last, by the way, consists of about 87 per cent. of water.

There is a tendency among women to drink far too little, but men do not, as a rule, require to be encouraged. Too much water should be avoided at meals, but the habit of having a glass of water between meals is a very good one, and should be encouraged. The effects of water-drinking are mechanical, chemical, and physical.

Water is a great cleanser; it is required for the efficient breaking-up and rendering of the foodstuffs, and to maintain the shape, size and general equilibrium of the tissues, it has to be supplied regularly to the blood.

It is one of the fundamentals of the modern plan that water should be available for, and if possible delivered to, every household.

Municipal or district supplies are almost invariably pure and palatable and, despite the criticisms with regard to the recent epidemic of enteric fever in Croydon, there can be no denying that the measures taken by water engineers, chemists and all those who are associated with the production of this vital requirement of humanity make it almost impossible for polluted water to reach the individual. At the same time, it must be realised that in isolated districts the inhabitants may have to rely on shallow wells or springs, not always the acme of hygienic perfection.

All water begins as rain and, although rain itself is a pure combination of hydrogen and oxygen, it may be contaminated first in the atmosphere, but more seriously by passing through cultivated soil. Furthermore as the water sinks more and more deeply into the earth, it may collect chemicals of various types, the chief of which are calcium and magnesium salts, derived from the different layers through which the water permeates. No matter, therefore, whether water be collected in reservoirs, or whether it slowly accumulates in shallow or deep wells, it is not the same substance as it was when it left the clouds.

In country places, the greatest precautions have to be taken with regard to the purification of the domestic water supply. There may be available, indeed, only the rain water running from the roof and collected in a barrel. In summer-time especially, when water becomes still and stagnant, germs quickly accumulate and multiply; thus there is great danger in drinking it but there are other ways of making water safe for drinking.

In the first place water may be softened, if not by boiling, which clears the hardness partially away, at least by passing it through one of the many forms of apparatus so frequently seen nowadays. Domestic water may also be filtered and thus made free from bacterial infection.

Our country cousins get the habit of boiling every drop that is set aside for drinking purposes. This tends to make the water rather soulless and uninteresting, but it can be aerated satisfactorily by passing it through a colander, the process being known as *cascading*.

In the more comprehensive subject of communal supply of water, there are many interesting points. When we turn the scullery tap to be rewarded with a foaming tumblerfull of cool clear bubbling liquid, we little think how much the potion has been nursed and generally looked after before it has been permitted to reach us.

Greatest precautions are taken by the authorities to keep reservoirs free from pollution. Consider that there is an average of thirty-five gallons a head allowed every day; surely this one fact suggests the enormity of the tasks in front of those who are responsible for our water welfare.

There has been much controversy over the pros and cons of the cold bath and the hot bath, and it would seem that a never-ending struggle must go on between the protagonists of different systems. Bellicose Spartans will plump for the daily plunge into frigid water, just as they stand by the Roast Beef of Old England.

Timid, sybaritic, luxury-loving moderns will bring science and common sense to their assistance and prove that the only way to take the greasy scum of industrialism from our congested hides is to apply plenty of soap and to use ample amounts of hot water which dissolves the grease. The water also effects a clearance of the skin, on account of the fact that its heat opens up the terminal blood vessels, increases the pressure in the pores and causes a spate of perspiration.

Muscles are also relaxed by hot water and, in general, there is produced a serene and soothing effect.

The counter-blow to this very plausible and logical statement is that cold water tones up the system because it makes the muscles firm, and the reaction that follows is one of great exhilaration. But healthy people do not require to be stimulated in the morning, because for them the morning is never the Morning After the Night Before.

While it is a very hygienic experience to have spray baths and needle baths before breakfast, these are not essential for normally fit young persons, although their value as cleansing agents cannot be over-estimated.

The use of water internally, combined with the use of water externally, is well demonstrated in the various forms of spa treatment. We are lucky in Britain in having certain districts in which there are wells and springs containing specific chemicals. The latter may be employed as saline tonics, or they may be useful, for example, in the form of brine, for constitutional ailments.

Finally, there is the great tonic effect of sea water. Most of us are born within reasonable distance of the seaboard and the beach is still our favourite holiday resort. There we take our full measure of the bountiful sea, which is ours by inheritance and right, returning full of the joy that comes from the ozone, the brine spray and the pure radiations from the sun.

Bathing with breakers is one of the most admirable forms of exercise. Swimming is fine for the body generally, but swimming against a choppy sea is real sport indeed. You come out of it glowing and tingling all over, with the blood surging through all the muscles and with an appetite that would shock even the most hardened mother of a family of schoolboys.

# Laugh

## The "PASSING SHOW

"You see, sir, I had rotten weather on my holiday!"

"Sorry, no ghosts to day!"

"The Kimos have gone all modernistic!"

Radio Fan: "I must gong you, Signalman Whitaker, you spelt that word incorrectly!"

# ...oker
## ...ow" Smile Section

"The umpire don't know 'is job."
"Don't 'e? 'Is job is butler to that bloke 'oo's batting!"

"You'll have to be more careful what you bring in; this old iron tells me he was on his way to a fancy-dress ball."

"I don't see why we can't land, Fred, there's somebody else picnicking!"

"I've got a respite from rolling the lawn until my wife finds the diamond ring she's lost!"

## A MAN OVERWEIGHT

BY A. C. BARRETT

**LAUGH WITH THE WORLD**

"No, that is my husband. The man under the other bed is the burglar."
*Das Illustrierte Blatt, Frankfurt.*

# MAN IN THE LIFT

**CAMEO STORY**
**BY DOUG WELCH**

JACK, I want to speak to you about one of your men."

"Yes, J. T. Of course."

"He's a tall fellow. Looks as if he hadn't a haircut since he left high school. In fact, he looks as if he lived in a box car."

"I think I know who you mean, J. T. His name is Jones."

"He was peeling an orange in the lift this morning. And one garter was dragging."

"I don't know what to do with him, J. T. I've warned him a good many times."

"Well, frankly, Jack, he makes a terrible first impression."

"You're absolutely right, J. T. He does."

"I think this business, after all, has a certain dignity to maintain."

"I think you put that very nicely indeed, J. T."

"Our salesmen, especially, ought to reflect the integrity and the dignity and the efficiency of this house. We ought to insist upon neatly-dressed, smartly groomed men."

"There's no question about it, J. T."

"If a man won't conform to our ideal, we'd better get rid of him."

"You're right, J. T. I'll let him go."

"I think that would be best, Jack."

"I don't care, even if he did sell a hundred thousand pounds last year!"

"What did you say!"

"I said, I don't care, even if he did sell a hundred thousand pounds last year."

"How much did you say he sold last year?"

"A hundred thousand pounds' worth, J. T."

"Well, of course, there is another side to the question, too. We don't want to make the mistake of being too exacting, either, Jack."

"No, J. T."

"We all have our little peculiarities, after all."

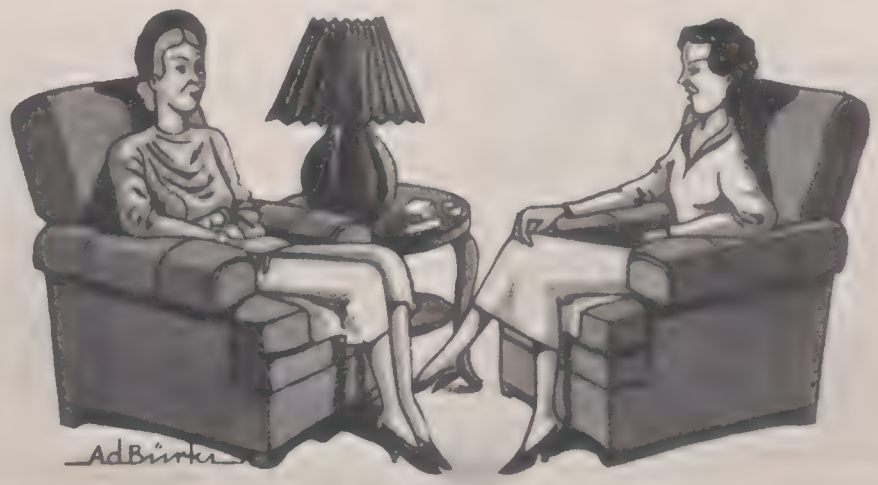
"That's quite true, J. T."

"When a man's doing his best, Jack, this firm is not going to be over-critical."

"I think that's simply good policy."

"You've got to try to understand men like Jones, Jack. We're not all Beau Brummells by nature, you know. You must learn to make allowances."

"I'll try, J. T."




"The tea-pot Aunt Martha gave me for my birthday is not real silver."
"Do you know about silver?"
"No, but I know Aunt Martha."—*Schweizer Illustrierte, Zurich.*

"Why did you give up that nice room?"

"I could not bear the landlady—she was so curious."

"Really?"

"Yes, she was always wanting to know when I was going to pay my rent."—*En Rolig Half Timma, Gothenburg.*

She: "The man I marry must be able to offer me security and protection."

He: "Well, I ought to fit the bill. I am an insurance agent and my father is a policeman."—*Die Woche im Bild, Olten.*

"Where were you born?"

"In Glasgow, but I went to school in Manchester."

"What a long journey you had every day to school!"—*Citizen, Ottawa.*

"I am worried to death. My son is travelling and I have not heard of him for some time."

"Where is he?"

"In Monte Carlo."

"Don't you worry—you will hear from him soon enough."—*Gente Nostra, Rome.*

Eric: "Mummy, I don't think chocolate pudding can be good for me."

Mother: "Why not?"

Eric: "I like it so much.—*Humoristicke Listy, Prague.*

"Why did your dear wife not come with you?"
"We drew lots as to who should come."
"And you won?"
"No, I lost." *Das Illustrierte Blatt, Frankfurt.*

*Continuing*

# COCKNEY IN THE COUNTRY

He gave it as his considered opinion that "you never will grow much up here"

## BY RALPH MICHAELIS

ILLUSTRATED BY BERTRAM PRANCE

"Dick Warham had it as a market garden," said the oldest inhabitant. "But look at it now." He turned away contemptuously

ONE week-end a famous soil expert whom I had known at Cambridge came out to see us. We dug him up spades full of garden, which he sniffed and tasted and passed through his fingers and examined under a magnifying glass, and baked in the oven.

And every time he examined it he liked it less.

In the end he gave it as his considered opinion that we should not plant anything at all the first year and, he added gloomily, "you never will grow very much up here."

"If you were not a guest in my house and a very old friend, I would accuse you of talking through your hat," I said. "As it is I will merely tell you that I don't believe a word you say, that you are a charlatan and a professional pessimist, without conscience and without consideration, and that I absolutely refuse to take the slightest notice of your mournful prognostications. I am determined to plant the garden this year and I am beginning now."

"But," said he, "I have the highest degrees . . ."

"I know," said I, "and you are doubtless aware that, although I have a degree in mechanical science, I couldn't put a wireless set together. Take your degrees and your professional mumbo-jumbo where the poor mutts believe in them."

To do the expert justice, the local people all agreed with him that "you'll never grow nothing there. Been neglected too long, it has."

"Oi can remember it eighty years ago, when Dick Warham had it as a market garden," said the oldest inhabitant. "He grew some fine stuff, he did. But look at it now." He turned away with a gesture of contempt.

"That's roight, Dick's son Tom had it arter him," said another, "the one they said was a miser; and after him his brother had it. But he didn't do nothing but dig about the garden after all that money they said his brother had buried here; but all he found was a few Roman coins, as had been here long before Tom or Dick or any of them had been born. No one's done anything to it since then. You'll never grow nothing there."

Even a cockney like myself could share their disgust at such shameful neglect. But these men who got their livings from the cultivation of the soil are entitled to feel indignant.

For to-day there are thousands of acres going to ruin all over the country, partly through the neglect of speculators playing it "for a rise," or by farmers with insufficient capital to cultivate it.

If compulsory confiscation were the forfeit to be paid for the neglect of one's land, there would be a considerable improvement in the state of what, after all, is the nation's one ultimate asset.

I maintain that if a man has charge of only half an acre of ground and does no more than lay out a tennis court on it, he is guilty of wasting a part of his country's heritage.

Only Jim Harvey, the gardener from the Big House, disagreed with the general verdict that I should never grow anything on my patch of ground, with the rather surprising theory that "where you can grow weeds you can grow anything."

There was certainly no difficulty about growing weeds, which seemed to be a more general hobby than I had suspected, until the great bindweed controversy arose about this time in the correspondence columns of *The Times*.

Gardening peers wrote impassioned letters that vied with those of exasperated commoners, either pleading for the recommendation of some method of bindweed extermination, or urging the use of their particular panaceas; while faint damns rose even from between the walls of peaceful, country rectories.

I was flattered to see that one reverend gentleman wrote recommending the very method which I was, myself, employing in exterminating these pests. He said that the only thing to do was to remove every trace of bindweed from the garden and burn it.

I reckon that it will take about 15,000 stoops a day for 3 years, or about 15,000,000 stoops, to clear my little half acre. Of course, two people stooping only 7,500 times a day could clear the ground in the same time, or by stooping 15,000 times a day, they could clean it up in eighteen months. Some evenings, after 15,000 of the best, I feel tempted to advertise permanent employment to six stoopers for three months, and be done with bindweed once and for all.

When I first started digging over my garden, the village thought I must be searching for Tom Warham's hidden treasure.

"You'll not find anything," they said, "his brother looked for years, and nearly died of starvation doing so. Leastways he finished up in the asylum."

When they saw that I was not only digging but planting, they were delighted. They gave me vegetable plants and flowering plants from their own gardens, with full instructions of how and when to grow them; and they showed me how to make a cold frame and how to raise seeds under glass in boxes.

Meanwhile, our soil expert, baulked of his prey, had gone off foraging for another victim, a good lady who was trying to turn five acres of meadow into a garden.

Instead of telling her to get it ploughed and harrowed, and planted with potatoes, or cabbages, or anything you like to get it into cultivation, he persuaded her to have the soil turned over and "aired" for a couple of years.

I am anything but an expert gardener; but I am a lucky one—with all the usual superstitious reservations. Whatever I plant, whether on stony, or any other soil, springs up to enormous and delicious dimensions. I do everything wrong, according to the text books, and still my children thrive.

There is only one thing that I cannot grow and that is lettuce. When I say that I cannot grow lettuce, I really mean that I cannot grow it for myself. I do grow vast quantities of lettuce. Like my other seeds, they spring up by the hundred thousand, the birds considerately ignoring them in favour of my neighbour's crops.

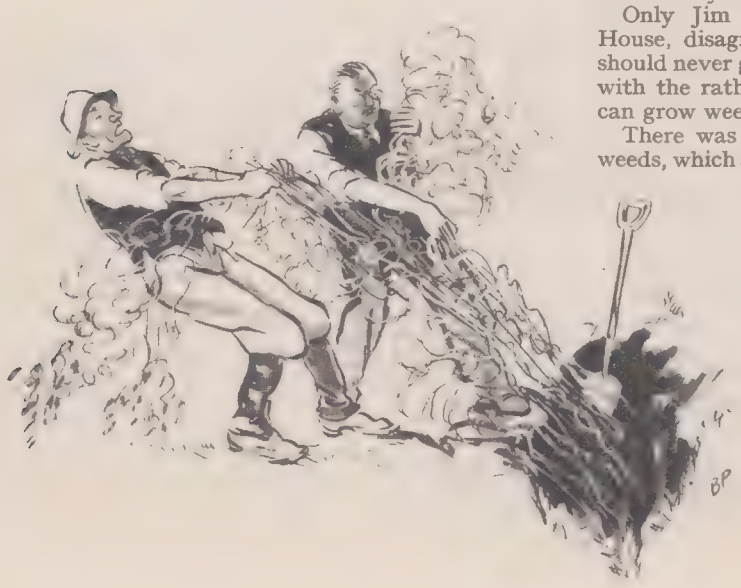
But as soon as there is a mouthful of nourishment on any lettuce of mine, the rabbits come in and eat it. Such pretty little bunnies they are, too, whether disporting themselves in the early morning among my lettuces, or sitting preening their whiskers in the noonday shade of the orchard!

I hate to shoot pretty bunnies; but if man does not destroy the rabbit, the rabbit will destroy man. Those bunnies have the power to starve all mankind to death, to swamp civilisation more surely than the most ruthlessly scientific war; and if it were not for the closing of the cricket season during a part of the year, they probably would too, at any rate in our neighbourhood.

For with us, the cricket season is almost a closed season for rabbit shooting. At other times of the year the young farmers and their friends go round shooting rabbits of a Saturday afternoon, but as soon as we start cricket, the rabbits come into their own (the double meaning is unintentional) and it's good-bye to my lettuces.

Of course, I could get a quarter of a mile of six foot high, narrow mesh wire, and dig it a foot deep into the ground, to prevent the little devils from burrowing under it; but I hate to see wire in a hedge; and somehow I would rather go on feeding the

(*please turn to page* 33)



The great bindweed controversy arose in the correspondence columns of "The Times." Gardening men wrote letters recommending methods for the extermination of the bindweed

# BLONDES' MAGIC

"Take your time, Sweetie Pie. This may be your big chance. Anyone can marry and settle down in a small way and cook and have kids"

JULY again. Five Julys since the two big doctors had stood and looked anywhere but in his eyes "We are very, very sorry. The child lived—but your wife. . . ." Afterwards he understood that everything had been done. Everything. He could even thank them with sincerity. Everyone had been so kind. The nurses. Friends. His mother. His heart had closed. Ever since he had lived with a closed heart. Only when he saw a very Scandinavian type, yellow hair and blue eyes, a thin lance of pain had broken into the heart. Showing that it was not dead, but only sealed against further pain and unnecessary emotion; but quite unnaturally and prematurely sealed.

He was only thirty, with his sealed heart—his kind, distant manner and his pleasant and impersonal smile. He was rich. He was very strong and healthy. He was good-looking.

It was hot in his office, in spite of electric fans and screened windows. The men walking in the busy street outside, were bare-headed. The girls wore loose, easy dresses. Everyone was gasping a little in the heat that beat up from the pavements. They were more gentle, enervated and exhausted than usual.

And then, suddenly, he saw Hannah Lofty.

She was walking very slowly with her vivid head held high. It was the most vivid, yellow hair he had ever seen. It was curled back in shining, silken, golden swirls. Incredible, magic stuff. She was smiling like a queen. Pride. Dignity. Happiness. They were all in Hannah Lofty's attractive little eighteen-year-old face. Not beautiful, just young and attractive; and madly, madly happy, that sweltering July evening.

The young man beside her was saying:

"I could eat you, Hannah! Look at the way they're staring at you. I'll bet they've never seen a head like it in all their days. And they never will again!"

Hannah Lofty was the young man's model and she had just secured for him the trophy and cup at a hair-dressing exhibition.

She had let him "brighten" her natural blonde hair and "perm" it before a crowd of experts and a small circle of interested general public. She was shy and it had been an ordeal. He had appreciated that. She wasn't the kind of kid to "go showing herself off."

Now they had won the coveted distinction. The old man would exhibit the trophy in his shop window. It would attract a great many customers, both for dyeing and brightening and permanent waving. The old man had promised him a partnership if he won it. It seemed incredible that he had. He envied no one. He would have changed places with no one that golden, ecstatic evening. He was on top of the whole wide world.

He and Hannah would be married. They would have a little three-roomed flat. By and by, they would have a little car, a big radio, a little baby, a big business of their own.

"I'm so proud I could burst," he confessed.

She looked at him and saw tears in his little, honest, unexciting eyes. She loved him then as she had never loved him before. Her heart opened softly and enclosed the unselfish wish and hope for his great happiness and well-being.

"They'd look more if they knew, dearest," she whispered, huskily. She had never called him "dearest" before. It sounded almost as if they were grown up and married and had a baby. Peaceful, safe and very, very beautiful.

The man in the office spoke to his secretary.

"Just look out of the window a minute, Miss Minnett," he said. "There's one of the most beautiful heads I've ever seen, just passing. Do you think it's dyed? Isn't it a marvellous colour?"

Miss Minnett looked.

"That's dyed all right," she said, viciously.

They looked so young and victorious those two. Kids. They'd got something out of life while they were young, while they could enjoy it.

"I don't think it's dyed," said her employer, slowly. "My wife had hair almost that colour."

It wasn't true. The glint and the gleam of that young, yellow hair came out of a bottle. It never grew on any human head with just that sheen and brilliance; but he had mentioned his wife. Easily. Without strain. He knew that the bright gold head in the street had released something in him.

"Had she," said his secretary. He had never mentioned his late wife before. She felt embarrassed. "It must have been very lovely."

The car deposited him. The chauffeur said goodnight and drove round to the garage. It was just like any other "home" evening in the last five, arid years.

Yet, it was nothing like them, because inside him there was a peace where there had been pain; and freedom where there had been bondage; and all because a head, gilded theatrically from a bottle, had passed in the busy street below his office window.

Miss Corcorran was sitting in the drawing-room waiting for him, just as she had waited for him for the last five years. Ever since his mother had engaged her to look after his home and his little girl. She was gentle and comely and restful. She was twenty-seven.

She said:

"You look rested, in spite of the heat."

The cocktails were iced and perfectly mixed. The roses in the room smelt cool and fragrant.

"I saw a girl to-day with the most wonderful golden hair you can possibly imagine," he said, suddenly. "It reminded me of my wife's hair. I asked Miss Minnett if it were dyed. She said 'yes' but I don't think it was. It was like corn with the sun on. Gilda's used to look like that in the sun."

For five years he had not spoken of his wife, and she had lived with that powerful, unsummoned ghost. She loved this man dearly. Now, suddenly, the other woman was with them in the room. Not to be dreaded. Not as a wife; but as a quiet ghost who had once bequeathed a different, younger kind of happiness. He paid his visit to the nursery; and he

Even though you might try to deny it, the world loves a blonde. Just see what the glint of golden hair did to the cynics

# BY CHRISTINE JOPE-SLADE

ILLUSTRATED BY TREYER EVANS

and Miss Corcorran dined together just as they had done for five years; but to-night it was different. They were alone. There was no shadowy usurper with Nordic colouring.

She had ceased to be a reality. She had taken her just place, as a lovely, past experience; and a stranger with a fantastic, metallic, prize-winning head had put her there.

Back in the drawing-room, the man turned on the expensive radio and Miss Corcorran fetched out her needlework. On the surface, it was like any other evening in those five years.

"My dear," he said, "I don't think I have ever thanked you for the fine way you have looked after us; for a perfectly run home, happy maids. For comfort and peace; and a happy laughing daughter."

"I have been very happy to do it; and very happy here."

"I have grown very fond of you," the man said; and there was real emotion in his voice. "It has been very gradual and very true. I don't think I ever realised until to-day. To-day something happened; and I don't know what. I *feel* different. As if I had come out into some new experience. My dear, could you marry me and make your home here? It would be a very loving, a very appreciative home. That I can assure you from the bottom of my heart."

He saw her face break into the tenderness she had so carefully repressed. It was charming and young.

"I'll be *so* good to you, my dear," he said, humbly and wonderingly.

He took his gilded lily to a night club. This was a gala night. Her head was the most perfectly groomed in the room; and the most violently burnished. She wore black. That set it off. He was drunk with happiness and triumph. He was so proud.

In the corner, one depressed-looking man said to another:

"That 'ud fetch 'em!"

"Common. She won't last. Those lacquered canaries never do."

"Who wants 'em to!"

They watched Goldilocks.

Towards the end of the evening, a waiter came across to the table with a card. On it was a man's name.

The hairdresser swore when he read it; and his model turned white. The waiter explained. There was nothing *personal* in it. The gentlemen were talent scouts looking for show girls for a big producer.

"Come back in a minute," the little hairdresser said to the waiter. He had dignity, and a great fear and horror in his heart which he hid.

"This is your chance, kid. Think it over."

She struggled. Things she had read, things she had seen on the films churned in her mind.

It was horrible and terrible while it lasted.

"It's my hair done it," she said at last, a little hoarsely. "Don't suppose they'd have looked at me twice but for that. I've got no real . . . sex appeal."

His eyes clung to hers desperately. He would not influence her. His mind was ticking over a kid's prayer. "Dear God, don't let her. Dear God, don't let her."

He managed a smile.

"Take your time, Sweetie Pie. This may be your big chance. Anyone can marry and settle down in a small way and cook and have kids."

She said, swallowing, settling her whole life, "I wouldn't fancy trapesing about all over the place. I want to get married. It's only my hair's got 'em, I tell you, dear, and that won't last."

He took her away soon after they sent the message across. His heart was bursting with gratitude. Throbbing with happiness. He thought "If I live to be a hundred I will never forget this." He knew he would; but he wanted to be immortal and to feel that this terrific, searing tenderness and gratitude for her was immortal, too.

At the door of the club the girl turned round to smile on the two men. After all; they had offered her a career; and perhaps fame.

"What a grin," said one.

There was something sweet and happy and tremulous in the young face that got through to them and attacked them where their illusions and ideals had once been; and that irritated them.

"Bottled or born, you can't resist a blonde, can you, Dickie?"

"It certainly was a snappy colour," said the other man. "It would have looked good in the limes, all right."

"The boss came out of his shell to-day with a plop," said Miss Minnett. "Some awful peroxide creature, stumping past in the street, reminded him of his late wife. It was so dyed you could see it a mile off."

"Pretty hard-boiled, aren't you?" said the man.

"No," said Miss Minnett, flatly and baldly, "I'm not! After, I wished I'd thought of something sweet to say; something that would have helped. I remember when she died. Gosh! it was awful! You get so scared stiff of letting yourself go in an office you aren't even human any more! She was such a *common* little beast. That's what got me. Prancing along with a head like a gilded lemon! Funny, she got him. He's usually reserved and I should have said, fastidious and pernickity."

"You women are hard on each other."

"We're not, Tom! There are so *many* of us—and all hanging on and hoping for a real life. They were as common as dirt, those two, the girl with the yellow hair and her young man; but they'd got each other. They were simply full of it."

"Jealousy?"

"Yes, horrible jealousy. I hated her."

"Remember; it's *you* who won't take a chance! I'd have married you a year ago. Why! you're not *crying*!!"

She was crying. Broken. All her fears and her independencies gone.

"I wanted to have two hundred behind us, Tom. Just two hundred. There might be a war. I might have a baby. Anything—anything."

"The years that the locust hath eaten," he said. "Bible, isn't it? Dear—don't let's go on wasting ourselves and each other. There may be a war. I may be out of a job again. We'll have had each other."

Miss Minnett clung to him desperately. Hands. Lips. He had never seen her like this.

As he soothed her, he marvelled and rejoiced.

A blonde had brought them together and established a life force they no longer wished to fight or resist on any logical grounds.

"Hair *is* news," she said. "It's big news to millions of women. They wear it all the time."

The young night editor looked at the manuscript in his hand and then at the woman reporter.

"Sob stuff or just plain coming-fashion reporting. I'll have to tear it up a bit. It's five hundred words."

"The man who won the First Prize was just—delirious! It meant a partnership and marriage. He was sweet. He'd dyed his girl's hair the most marvellous gold; *and* permed it. It was simply *marvellous*; no colour that ever was on land or sea really; and yet just *beautiful* as a work of art. They were so sweet, those two; quite young."

"It's no story. How women are going to rake their hay this season. That's the angle."

"You told me to remember 'All the world loves a lover.'"

"Yep; but only when he murders someone or does something big about it. Then we love him, too—in headlines! With photograph."

"Modern journalism gets filthier and filthier—and further away from reality. Everyone isn't getting murdered and divorced and burgled and assaulted and born in threes and fours."

"The only ones who interest us are."

He savoured her. Young. Decent. Keen.

"Quit it."

"Couldn't. I like the racket like you."

"O.K. We'll stay in it together; and I'll quit this job and have a stab at home life."

"Oh, my dear! you won't really. You'll only half promise to, but we'll make the grade as long as we get married and stick closer than close. The only people who escape the rot and the general disillusionment are those who stick closer than close. I see it on every assignment I get."

"Only eight weeks to wait. Darling; we won't shift the date a minute, but I think that little honeymoon's *off*. The Chief is going to America. I'll have to stick. Heard from the new sports editor, just before he went off."

"Hell!"

"I'll ask for six weeks leave when he comes back and we'll go places."

"You won't,"

"No, but I like to *think* I will."

They laughed together.

"One day, I'll have a quiet little provincial paper and *really* take it easy," they chanted together. "Thousands of 'ads coming in automatically. No stop press column."

It was their silly saga.

"I got a photograph of the girl."

"What girl?"

"The girl who got the first prize at the hairdressers' exhibition for her young man. Do put the story in, Hilary, please. It's human and they *were* so thrilled and all jacked-up about everything."

A man dashed in.

"Sorry, old lady," said the night editor, hastily. "That Browne fellow's croaked it. That's murder. Not manslaughter. A couple of stiffs and a big nullity in this issue. Sorry, old lady—your story's out!"

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# cooltan

# BACK AND TANS

## VIRGINIA HALL'S PAGE

AMONG my letters this week was a note from a girl who said, "I am in despair because not only am I ugly, but also I cannot make friends easily. I feel that people are criticising me all the time."

She sent her photograph along and it showed that she wasn't ugly at all. Not a beauty, perhaps, but just think how few real beauties there are, even among those whose faces are their fortunes. How few of the film stars are really beautiful. Yet they have something that gets them where they are—a certain assurance.

Myrna Loy is an example. She has more poise than most of the film stars. But she's not a beauty, and she's not always had that self-assurance and poise.

It has been developed through years of experience in movie-making until now it is a habit with the auburn-haired star.

Myrna Loy is quite honest about it, too. "In the days when I was playing small, unimportant parts," she says, "my greatest interest was in watching great screen stars work. I tried to analyse the reason for their success. After several months, I discovered they all had one thing in common—poise.

"So I started to try to develop poise, which is simply being at ease all the time. I used to practise relaxing more than I did acting.

"Finally it became a habit, like any other oft-practised ritual. I found myself benefiting, not getting excited, reserving energy.

"It was my ability to relax in any circumstances that won my first recognition on the screen. When talking pictures were introduced, I was given a chance in a speaking role. Long hours of practice paid me then, for I wasn't ill at ease in front of the microphone.

"So my advice is to develop poise. Self-control, under all conditions, gives a young man or woman a real start in life."

I agree with her. That worried reader of mine could well take a leaf out of Myrna Loy's book. Worrying about her looks will only make them worse. And beauty is not everything. If she relaxes, as Myrna does, and by so doing is completely natural, I don't think she'll be lacking friends for long.

★ I've just returned from a cocktail party given by a friend to announce her engagement. There were lots of smart people there and lots of awfully attractive dresses. I noticed particularly the number of women who chose to wear magenta, or in some cases the good old-fashioned "puce."

It's a lovely colour, but how I wish women wouldn't wear it regardless of their own colouring, for it's by no means a kind colour to most of us.

There was one woman at the party who had at least tried to do something

to make her face go with her frock. She'd lipsticked her lips a bright mauvy-puce to match it! Personally I thought it awful. She looked to me as though she suffered from blood-pressure or something of the kind.

I realise how difficult it is to get a lipstick to go with different outfits and that it costs a lot of money to have even half a dozen different shades from which to choose. But rather than the wrong lipstick, I would prefer none at all!

An enterprising firm, making one of the most famous of all lipsticks, has come to my rescue. Especially for PASSING SHOW readers they have had made the most attractive set of baby lipsticks. Ten of them—every one a different shade with such attractive names as Coro, Promenade, Medium, Light, Framboise, Sun Flame, Suntan, Sunglow, Poppy and Cyclamen. And all for the price of one of their full-sized lipsticks, which is 4s. 6d. Take it from me there's much more lipstick contained in these samples and they're well worth having.

With these lipsticks is a colour chart that will keep you from making any mistake when colouring your lips.

I had a grand time with mine and found one I liked so much that I invested in a full-sized one in that particular shade.

Write to me, marking your envelope "Ten," and enclosing a postal order for 4s. 6d., and I'll have this set of lipsticks sent to you. I know that when you see them you'll be glad you've taken advantage of this special offer, which you can only get through the PASSING SHOW.

★ The other day I saw a girl holding a lovely handbag which can be copied quite easily. It was white, the shape of an envelope, and on the non-flap side it had her name and address embroidered in blue. It looked really cute and would also be rather grand in felt or heavy linen, in white or pale blue.

All you would have to do would be to write, in your best flowing hand, your name, just as you would address an envelope, with a sharp pencil and then sew over it very neatly. It would make a grand summer bag, for it could be made of washable material.

Anyhow, I'm having one!

★ Here's a recipe for a summer lunch or supper. It's for egg and asparagus *mousse*.

Drain the contents of a tin of asparagus tips and press through a sieve. This should make nearly a cupful of puree. Chop four hard-boiled eggs finely.

Sprinkle two tablespoonfuls of gelatine on four tablespoonfuls cold water and dissolve over boiling water. Whip half cupful cream, add gelatine, fold in asparagus puree, eggs, half teaspoonful salt, a shake of pepper, one tablespoonful ketchup and quarter cupful of mayonnaise or salad dressing.

Pour into individual moulds that have been dipped in cold water. Chill until firm and then tip out each upon a crisp lettuce leaf. Will serve six.

★ While gossipping with an American at a wedding last week-end, we fell to discussing the difference between ceremonies here and in the States.

He told me of one American wedding, many years ago, in the old south which is remembered to this day for its splendour.

A wealthy plantation owner in Louisiana had two daughters who were getting married on the same day, so he determined to give them a really spectacular show. Leading up to their fine, old, white home was a long drive of pine trees. These trees he had covered with the finest lace.

To do this he ordered a shipload of spiders from China, a few weeks before the wedding and let them loose among the trees.

On the great day the trees were covered with the filmiest of cobwebs, which were then sprayed by hand with gold and silver dust, so that the two thousand guests walked to the wedding under a canopy of the loveliest gold and silver lace.

But my American friend could not tell me what happened to the spiders.

★ Some weeks ago I told you of a girl friend who had a milk-and-roses complexion and hated the sun, yet liked to look sun-tanned with some of her outfits. So she used brown make-up.

This week I want to tell you how you may become *really* sun-tanned without any of the trials of sun-burn.

I know of a cream—actually I use it, myself—which absolutely stops sun-burn, yet promotes sun-tan. It contains ingredients that prevent and relieve sunburn but also hasten the tanning effect of the sun's rays. By using it you can get that rich, coppery-bronze tan in half the time it usually takes to get even an indifferent tan.

Another grand thing about it is that you can rub it over the skin which will be exposed to the sun before you go out, for this cream disappears like a vanishing cream and will not come off on your clothes.

I advise all mothers with children who run about on the beach all day to use this cream, for it will enable the youngsters to stay in their beach clothes in the sun, without being burned.

If you are burned already, this cream will heal and sooth. For it gives instant cooling relief. For more particulars, write to me, marking your envelopes "Sun-tan."

If you are interested in any of the things mentioned in these pages, please write to Virginia Hall, c/o "The Passing Show," 92 Long Acre, W.C.2, for she is very willing to help

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## WHO'S WHO IN THE LAND OF OOLOOM

**SAM KILLICK,** a journalist, is describing what happened while he was a member of a cruising party, sailing the southern seas in the yacht, *Solar Star*, which was in the charge of

**CAPTAIN JOHN BARLEY,** a grey-haired veteran, who realised something had gone wrong with the world when all laws of navigation were upset by a storm that wrecked the yacht's radio and disabled her engines. Meanwhile,

**JAMES HENRY WENDERBY,** twenty-six-year-old millionaire-owner of the *Solar Star*, and his friend,

**"TINY" MILTON,** gigantic in stature and in good nature, and Wenderby's cousin, sinister

**DOCTOR GEORGE THORMANSON,** whose brilliance as a scientist is outweighed by his greed, are surprised when a 'plane lands to leeward of the yacht, revealing lovely

**SALLY ALTON,** noted girl flier and one of America's most photographed women, and her secretary,

**NINA LENNOX,** another beauty. They started out on a long-distance flight, but difficulties in navigation caused by the storm were too much for them, and they were lost when they sighted the yacht. Eventually, the *Solar Star* drifts to the Antarctic continent and a party goes ashore to explore. Thormanson finds a great stone door leading into a strange new land where they meet a giant,

**EENOON,** who explains that they are in the land of Ooloom, a land inhabited by giants and governed by a different time-scale. Not only do these people live to an incredible age, but also they communicate with each other by telepathy, and the people from the yacht find their thoughts and their memories being ransacked by these amiable monsters, whose day is six months of polar light. They travel through the land, welcomed everywhere by giants, and come eventually to a cave dwelling where they fall into the deep sleep of the exhausted. Killick, the first to awake, is exploring the caves when he hears a scream of terror.

# WORLD WITHOUT TIME

## BY W. J. PASSINGHAM

ILLUSTRATED BY T. GRAINGER JEFFREY

Struggling helplessly in the hands of two giants was George Thormanson

THOSE shrieks of terror snapped the mental fetters which held me hypnotised in silent communication with the aged giant; startled me, so that I leaped to my feet as one who awakens from a particularly vivid nightmare. My mind was still blurred and confused, but clearing rapidly, when I saw a big hand moving slowly on its way to make me prisoner. As I stepped nimbly out of reach, I noticed that my speed of movement bewildered him. Not daring to risk another glance into those glowing eyes, I ran out of the cave by the way I had entered it—pausing only to locate the direction of those fearful cries still ringing through my head.

With growing dismay, I realised that all sounds had now ceased!

It was much darker here, too, and I searched frantically among the shadows for another exit. I found it at last—beyond the entrance to the place where the aged giant still sat so still upon his wooden platform. There was an opening, deep in shadow, which led I knew not where. Beyond, I made out a short passage with a lighter patch dispersing the shadows at the further end, and ran on in that direction at the top of my speed. . . .

The ominous silence after those terrible shouts filled me with apprehension. Whatever had happened, it was too late now! That passage proved to be longer than I anticipated, and already I was in doubt about the direction of the shouts. I had nearly reached the end of it when someone deliberately stepped out of the darkness to bar my way.

"Easy, Sam!"

It was Tiny Milton's voice speaking in low, urgent tones. I came to a standstill with a suddenness that nearly brought us both crashing to the ground.

"What the hell is happening here?" I gasped. "Someone shouted . . ."

"It was Thormanson!" he hissed. "There's no danger, Sam, but you've just missed one of the best shows I've ever seen. It's not quite over yet. Keep out of sight, and peep round this corner."

"But those shouts were terrible, Tiny."

By way of answer, he pushed my head round a tall pillar of rock and then clapped his hand over my mouth to stifle the cry that bubbled to my lips. I saw a large and lofty cave, well lighted from above my head, and the walls were quite unlike those of the other caves. They were smooth, living rock and, at first glance, appeared to be covered with patterns etched in brilliant colours. But it was the further wall, the end of this great cavern, which claimed my immediate attention—held me stiff with fear so that the occupants of the place were, at first, of no account.

Such a frightful apparition stood there, with legs wide apart, as I hope never to see again! It was a startling, a fearsome figure, quite naked and carved in the rock with such perfect colouring as to render it a life-like picture. The figure was of a giant at least fifteen feet in height, and the features were utterly bestial and revolting. Long hair, the colour of unripened corn, streamed down upon mighty shoulders. The face was distorted with an expression of cruelty and greed, so perfectly carved and coloured that the great face seemed to be alive!

It stood there above the doorway, a fearsome sentinel, and one had either to retreat or pass from the cavern between the straddled legs. Action was depicted in every line of this life-like colossus. One huge hand was upraised and clasping a man of normal size by the throat, and so perfectly proportioned was the helpless victim that he appeared to be wriggling with terror between the giant's fingers.

Having taken in this startling scene, my attention shifted to the two occupants of the cavern and here tragedy ceased and comedy began. A smaller and living giant of Ooloom was grasping George Thormanson by the neck from behind, forcing him to stare at the image carved upon the wall. It was easy to understand George's terror now, for he was being forced to play the part of the helpless victim in the picture. So slowly moved the Ooloomian who held him a prisoner that both of them were still standing in precisely the same attitude as when George first beheld that terrible figure carved on the wall.

"What actually happened here, Tiny?" I gasped. "Who shouted as though every fiend in Hell were after him?"

"Thormanson," he assured me, in a whisper. "He's still hunting for diamonds. After that row we had with him about the shooting he dared not search for them openly. Oh, he's a clever swine, is our George! He persuaded me to try that mental telepathy business with Eenoon in the hope of learning something useful for his own ends. Thormanson has never ceased searching for diamonds since he arrived here, and I know because I've had my eyes on him all the time.

"When he left the cave where we were sleeping, I followed him here. I saw one of the big boys roll off that long ledge over there and creep up slowly behind old George, who was struck stiff at sight of that carving on the wall. It's a grim warning to trespassers, you know. I saw the big fellow smiling as he collared George and imitated the strangling act. Thormanson suddenly found himself in the same position as the victim, and thought he'd met his finish. And was he scared! He just kept wriggling away, and yelling his head off."

"The big fellow's releasing him," I warned. "What are you going to——?"

"Quiet!" he implored. "Keep out of sight, Sam. This is going to be better than the movies. . . ."

Tiny was about right. When Thormanson could turn his head he was registering blue murder! He was deathly pale, too, shaking with rage.

"Damn and blast you!" he croaked to the Ooloomian. "If only I had that gun with me I'd teach you to grin!"

With a quick movement, he stepped back out of the giant's reach and then darted toward the opening. In a flash, he had passed between the legs of the monster on the wall and was gone. Tiny and I were even quicker as we ran round the bemused Ooloomian in pursuit of George Thormanson. There was another long passage ahead of us outside the cave, and we were just in time to see our quarry reach the further end and disappear from view. George was lucky to get away with it, for at the moment he disappeared another of the Ooloomians stepped out slowly and majestically from somewhere near the end of the passage. Hard as we ran to win through, the giant managed to complete his step before we reached him. When we turned to go back the giant we had left in the cave was advancing to block the way of escape. While we hesitated, the giants reached the centre of the passage at both ends, and we were fairly caught.

As they gradually closed in upon us, I heard in the distance those crooning vowel sounds which passed for speech in this country, and instinctively I knew that a general warning was being sounded through the caves. Thormanson must be advancing upon forbidden ground somewhere ahead of us. . . .

The giants took us firmly by the hand, and from their crushing grip, escape was impossible. We were conducted by degrees back to the cave of queer colours, and during our slow progress we had time to examine its walls. There were pictures in colour everywhere—pictures of strange men and strange animals carved in the long ago. When they noticed our interest the giants stayed to allow us a close examination of the carvings.

They were, I imagine, the work of cave-dwellers who preceded the Ooloomians and, if the one over the doorway was any criterion, those ancient people must have been an even bigger race of men. We recognised many pictures of giant sloths—and of something I had hitherto missed in this country. I saw carvings of huge birds of the eagle and hawk variety and remembered that, so far, I had seen no birds in Ooloom. In a dark corner we found a carving of great size—that of a giant sloth as big as an elephant. All these pictures were perfect specimens of their kind and they represented a high standard of art.

The two giants who held us watched our reactions to these pictures closely and seemed highly gratified by our appreciation. They conducted us out of that cavern gently but firmly, and then I saw that our destination was none other than the place where I had left the aged giant sitting cross-legged upon a small platform—from whose presence I had fled when Thormanson's terrible shrieks interrupted us.

The venerable old giant sat in exactly the same position as I had left him, calm, unperturbed by all that had passed. He was smiling, too, but when he looked over my head at the two who guarded us, the smile faded. For a few moments, he stared at our two companions, and I felt the grip upon my hand gradually loosening until I stood free. They stepped slowly backward to the entrance until their great bulk blocked the doorway entirely.

There was no escape this time!

When I turned and faced the patriarch again, his eyes were glowing with the psychic force required for mental communication. This time I obeyed his unspoken command, seated myself upon the ground before him. Thereafter I, Samuel Killick, was no longer conscious of my own existence. I seemed to become one with the wind outside and a witness to what was impressed upon me as the Beginning. . . .

Came a sensation of rushing through endless Space, a vast confusion of scenes passing too swiftly for identification, and then the pace gradually died down until my vision became steady and concentrated upon a spot near to the volcano towering above Ooloom. No smoke poured from the crater now. . . .

From out the face of the volcanic rock, honeycombed with many entrances to caverns, fearsome beings came striding—giants such as I had recently seen carved upon walls of rock. These creatures could move with all the speed and agility of my own people, but with such expressions of ferocity and ruthlessness that they must have been savages.

Then came men such as myself, but darker, more swarthy and of powerful build—traders moving down a caravan trail that stretched far away to the sea itself. I saw merchandise spread out upon the ground for inspection, where it was examined, approved and ex-

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changed for—diamonds! When all the bargaining was done, these traders from the outside world departed and, as they went, I recognised on those dark, animated faces the desire in their hearts. They talked and speculated upon nothing but diamonds.

Gradually, the scenes changed until my attention was centred upon one man—a great and inspiring personality, much nearer to the Ooloomians I knew—and in his eyes shone the light of courage, understanding and tolerance. Up and down the country I saw him moving, alone at first—and then the number that accompanied him grew rapidly until he preached to a multitude of people. Of his message I could understand nothing, but its effect upon his audience was in the nature of a miracle. From that scene onward, the pictures changed rapidly, and with them the appearance of the Ooloomians. I saw the evolution of thought, which changed the very nature of ferocious savages, until they came forth as a peace-loving, studious people. They became contemplative, seeking after and preserving the secrets of nature until the tempo of life slowed down and they had time to think and to prepare.

Only the dark strangers from the outside world remained the same, for they still came during the season of light with their goods, but with the passage of time their covetousness increased. For always there were diamonds to exchange for goods.

Already, judging by the history of my own people, I knew the end of this story and I wondered. . . . The Ooloomians were now a peaceful, harmless people, unarmed. . . .

The threats and demands of the traders grew, of course, and at last I saw the inlet where the *Solar Star* had found refuge from the sea filled with ships of war. A mighty army landed. Rank upon rank it gathered from out the ships—lined up along the shore until its numbers were lost among the mists of the horizon. Slowly it began to move forward along the ancient caravan trail. . . .

I saw seven men of Ooloom standing upon a peak of the mountain, which towered high over the inlet from the sea, and, in silence, they watched the forces of war arrayed against them. Calm, utterly detached and serene, they appeared as guardian angels rather than as men. What their purpose might be, standing on that elevated spot, I could not discover. But behind them a heavy pall of black smoke arose over Ooloom, and the earth trembled from a grinding shock far down below the surface. A mighty wave of water, foam-crested, boiling, rushed down upon the inlet to set the ships of war rocking and dragging at their anchors as in a great storm.

Then came the wind, howling and shrieking like a living thing in agony; an icy wind that stilled the tramp of countless feet, the shouts of command—that halted an army of men who feared what they saw and felt, but could not understand. The light faded gradually and the wind increased. Great rocks high above the inlet came tumbling down with sounds like the crash and reverberation of thunder, to block the road to Ooloom, and upon the glassy surface of fast-freezing water I saw reflected the red glow of flames from an awakened volcano.

This picture became blurred in my mind, faded slowly, and was replaced by a scene of desolation. The inlet from the sea was frozen solid now, and snow lay everywhere beneath the shadow of the mountain. Not a sound could be heard, no bird flew—not a living thing moved in the darkness. But as the light increased I saw a group of Ooloomian giants working hard about a great square mass of solid rock which swung about as on a central pivot. . . .

No more traders came in search of diamonds.

Again I had the sensation of rushing through space and time until once more there appeared a picture of the great volcano towering high above Ooloom. It was a picture to emphasise the fact that once more a heavy pall of black smoke was there—that the volcano was awake!

Now questions took shape in my mind and I fought hard to assert myself and place them there. I thought of time, of age—conjured up mental visions of first a baby, then a boy, a fully matured man, and, finally, the picture of the aged patriarch himself. There was no immediate response, only a sense of bewilderment came in answer. I then pictured a child in a cradle, and an old man lying dead upon a bed, and again waited—hoping my question might be understood.

The answer came at last, in the form of another question. I saw a man standing upon the earth's surface, with the great planet rotating slowly beneath his feet. For a long while I studied the picture and, at last, grasped its meaning. It was meant to show that a man's life-span was not measured by these people in terms of time, but over the distance he had travelled through space as an occupant of the earth. My question must have reached its mark, for there followed a period of waiting while my communicant considered how best to make answer.

Finally, I received a warning of numbers about to begin. There flowed in upon me consecutive periods of light and darkness, and I counted carefully to the number of nine hundred and fifty of each. My visions faded abruptly, darkness seemed to flow over me like a tide, and I knew no more. When I regained consciousness, Tiny Milton was supporting my head while a giant held a bowl of milk in readiness. Not even the thought of sloths stayed my thirst then and I drank the lot with a deep sigh of satisfaction.

As I scrambled to my feet, the two giants stepped toward us determinedly. We went quietly, because there was no chance to do otherwise, and came at last to the cave where Jimmy Wenderby still slept. Sally and Nina were disappearing through the other entrance in charge of Aaneen just as we arrived.

Jimmy sat up as we came in and wanted to know where we had been. So we told him the whole story—omitting for the moment my mental communications with the aged giant.

"So George is still missing?" he commented.

"Still missing," Tiny agreed, grimly, "and he'll want some catching this time. He's determined to find where they keep diamonds in this place. I suppose the old boy didn't let you in on that secret, Sam?"

"I saw a lot of diamonds changing hands," I answered, "but nothing about where they were kept."

"I'm not asking for any breaches of confidence," said Tiny, slowly, "but is your cousin a poor man, Jimmy? I mean is he so hard up that——?"

"Nothing of the kind!" Jimmy declared. "George has a small private income which many prosperous people would consider ample. That's not the reason for George hunting diamonds, although where money is concerned he's never been satisfied in his life. No, George's interest in diamonds is a professional one. Our late uncle, Jacob van Druyden, held an interest in a South African diamond syndicate and he left his shares to George. The firm's headquarters are in Cape Town, where their operations have something to do with the Government control of the diamond market.

"They have to hoard diamonds—to the extent of about eight million pounds worth, I believe—or the bottom would drop out of the market and the stones become cheap all over the world. What George wants to know is probably the quantity and the quality of the diamonds here, because they might become a menace to his holdings. A big diamond discovery outside South Africa would ruin the market, and bring shares tumbling down."

Tiny Milton whistled softly. "So that's how it stands. You say the old boy in the cave showed you plenty of diamonds, Sam?"

"He certainly did!" I answered. "It seemed to me, too, that there always has been plenty of diamonds here. But where they get them I don't know. We covered a long period of time—from the early history of Ooloom to the present time. . . ."

I went on to relate the whole story as it was depicted for me by the aged giant, and found I had a most attentive audience. Not until I explained my attempts to discover the patriarch's age was I interrupted.

"You counted nine hundred and fifty periods of light, and the same number of dark periods?" Tiny rapped out in startled tones.

"That's the number I counted, but I'm hanged if I'm any wiser even now," I said.

"Pull yourself together, Sam," he chided. "Start counting. The year is split up into two equal periods of daylight and darkness here and if the old boy has seen nine hundred and fifty of each he, he's. . . . Damn it all! He's nine hundred and fifty years old, according to our reckoning!"

"Then he's a liar!" declared Jimmy Wenderby, confidently. "Nine hundred and fifty. . . . Here, what are you trying to put over on us, Sam?"

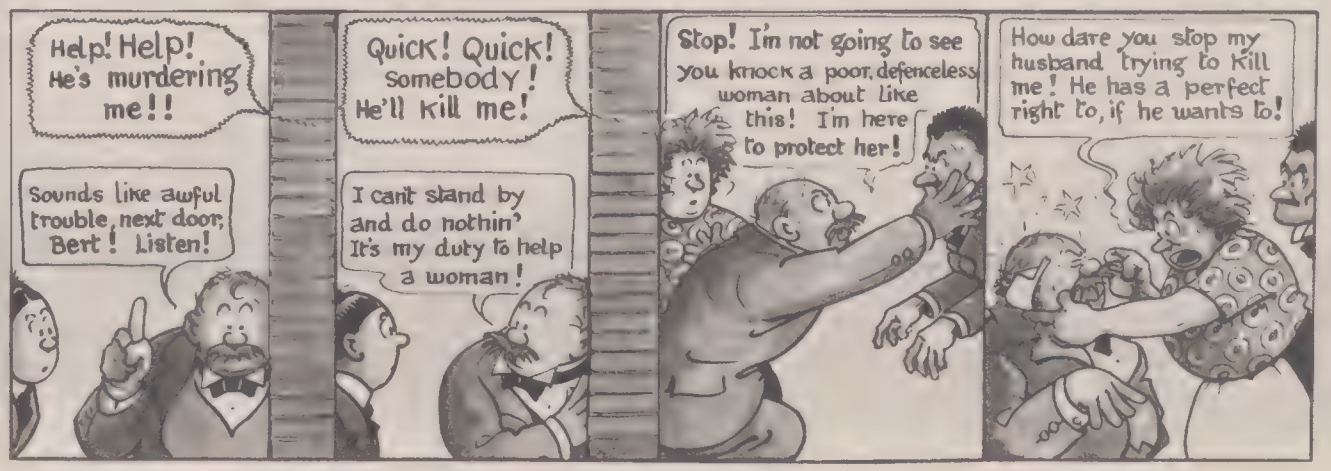
"What I've told you is on the level," I maintained. "There was no mistake on my part. Why, I didn't realise the significance of the numbers until Tiny had a go at it. Do you remember George Thormanson warning us about age in this place? Remember when he talked about Aaneen's age, and. . . . Why, what's the matter, Tiny?"

I had been looking at him all the time, and at this reference to Aaneen I saw him wilt as though I'd struck him. Too late I remembered the state of affairs between them, and hastened on with the conversation to cover my confusion.

"Don't you think that something ought to be done about Thormanson as quickly as possible? After what we've seen and heard, the people here aren't anxious to show us their diamonds . . ."

OLD BILL and BERT

By BRUCE BAIRNSFATHER



"In any case," Jimmy decided, "we'll have to find George. He wouldn't hesitate to commit sacrilege here or anywhere else while diamonds are about. But there's something else just as urgent now. It's a long time since we left the *Solar Star* and old John Barley must be anxious about us. Sally and Nina want to go back for a clean up and a change of clothing. We ought to get on with those two jobs right away. Since you boys know this place a bit better than myself, you'd better go in search of George. I'll go on to the yacht with the girls and get back here as soon as I can. What about it?"

"We'll do our best," Tiny agreed, "but we'll have a job on our hands getting beyond the cave with the pictures."

When Jimmy was gone, Tiny turned to me. "Sam," he said earnestly, "I've an idea there's a kind of 'Holy of Holies' about here somewhere and the big fellows don't want us to find it. I think, too, it has something to do with diamonds —and if so we'll find George right there. But if he goes too far he'll be in serious trouble. These big people may be slow and easy, but I know they're far from being defenceless. Now let's go carefully, Sam. Where do we start looking for Thormanson in a place like this?"

"Search me," I said, as we moved off together. "There are bolt-holes everywhere. We'll have to dodge and run for it, Tiny. Speed is our only chance against the big fellows."

And so it proved, when we entered the cave of pictures. We expected to find someone on guard there and were not disappointed. A giant sat on the long ledge of rock in the shadows, but before he could even think about moving we were racing between the legs of the monster over the doorway for the passage beyond. This time we did not hesitate, but ran on until we turned a sharp corner into broad daylight!

We were in a covered space, beneath overhanging rock, and facing us was the open countryside of Ooloom—with moss-covered ground stretching away into the distance. Not a man was in sight, but we started out into the open very cautiously.

"They can never catch us now," Tiny observed, as we strode out for what appeared to be the base of a high mountain range. Snow crowned the heights before us, where the smoking volcano itself became lost in the clouds.

"I expected to find plenty of opposition about here," I said, suspiciously. "We have the place to ourselves."

"They're all out after Thormanson, I expect," said Tiny, grinning, "and it'll take 'em days to reach him. That's not our trouble, Sam. These people can communicate with each other by mental telepathy, and I think we'll find our troubles begin at those mountains ahead."

Our pace had dropped to a steady walk now, and there seemed no need for hurry. We were advancing over rising ground and had reached the top of a low hillock, just as a herd of giant sloths reached it from the opposite direction. In a moment, we were among the huge, furry creatures, and I recognised real danger from their formidable claws until Tiny shouted loudly to scare them. In the mad rush that followed we were both knocked clean off our feet and, before we could rise again, the whole herd was gone!

"I expect the giant in charge of those things is among the crowd over there," Tiny said, pointing toward the mountain.

I looked in that direction, and saw a number of giants gathered about the largest entrance in the face of the rocks.

"What happens now?" I queried. "We can't rush through a crowd like that."

"Over to the left," he said, shortly. "It looks like a small opening there, but anything's better than standing out in the open now. Let's start running, before they see us!"

So off we went at a fast run, veering away to the left and we reached a narrow entrance among the rocks without attracting attention. From daylight into darkness we ran and were forced to stop there until our eyes were accustomed to the gloom. With a hand pressed against the nearest wall, we went forward slowly, feeling for an opening to lead us out of the place. On and on we went, walking in pitch darkness now and without the slightest idea of what lay ahead. We reached the end at last, or rather Tiny arrived a few seconds in front of me for I heard a bump and a stream of lurid curses.

And at that same moment my hand left the wall and met empty space.

"Hold on, Tiny," I said. "There's a hole just here."

Came the scratch of a match, and a tiny flame appeared. A cigarette case was pushed into my hand at the same time. The light showed us a wide opening in the wall, and a passage running off at a sharp angle to it.

"That's our way," I decided and lighted a cigarette just before the match went out. A glowing tip in front of me revealed Tiny's position in the darkness. But there is little consolation in smoking where smoke is invisible and presently we threw away our cigarettes and set off again on our hunt for George Thormanson. That passage twisted and turned until we lost all sense of direction, and serious thoughts about turning back were in my mind, when the end came in sight around a sharp bend. We both halted, for ahead of us the darkness was pervaded by a dull red glow.

"Is that something to do with the—the volcano?" I muttered.

Tiny laughed. "Poor old Sam," he lamented. "You'll never be so close to a volcano and live to tell the tale."

We reached the end of that passage before I noticed I was bathed in perspiration and breathing heavily. The red glow had increased until we could see each other clearly. I was close behind Tiny when I heard his gasp of amazement, and looked over his shoulder to see the strangest, the most awe-inspiring sight of my life. . . . The first structure in Ooloom fashioned and decorated by the hands of men!

A place so vast that its extreme end, away to our left, was lost in moving shadows—a great dome far above our heads glowing bright red, throwing red light on to walls paved with slabs of dressed stone. Between these great slabs of smooth, white stone ran lines of gold—thin bands of gold used as cement is used to point and secure tiles!

To our right, raised high upon a facing of white stone was displayed such a symbol as I had never dreamed of finding here. It fairly blazed and reflected a thousand leaping fires of red and blue. A significant symbol twenty feet in height and fifteen feet across, its two members at least two feet wide—in fact, a cross of the same design as we place above our own Christian altars.

This was a cross covered and encrusted with diamonds which scintillated light. Where the two members, which formed the cross, met I saw a table-diamond of fantastic size and beauty.

"My God!" gasped Tiny at last. "Do you see what I see, Sam, or are we both drunk? That—that diamond cross . . ."

"It's there all right," I said. "But what do you think it means to these people?"

"There's a great statue below it," Tiny breathed in my ear, "a statue without a face!"

Following the direction of Tiny's forefinger I saw an enormous stone figure, mounted on a mighty pedestal. The details of the statue escaped me in the uncertain light, but the great head of it was the real problem. It was a well-shaped head, perfect—except that the face of it was missing. Overawed by so many things I did not understand, I still remembered the main object of our search.

Many Ooloomians were standing reverently before the great diamond cross, and I searched in vain until a small group in the very centre of the vast floor near the statue at last attracted my attention. I stared, nudged Tiny Milton sharply, pointed to the central figure in that small group. Struggling helplessly in the hands of two giants was George Thormanson. . . .

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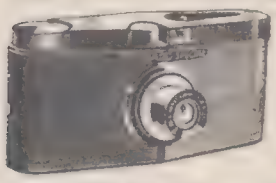

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# WHAT PRICE SCANDAL?

**Exiles still recall the weeks when the *Myobb* lay at anchor in their Mediterranean port, hiding grim secrets of marital strife in her tiny cabin**

## BY WILSON MACARTHUR
ILLUSTRATED BY CLIVE UPTTON

SHE was far from being beautiful. Wide mouth, too-short nose, fair hair pulled untidily back from a forehead that was almost masculine, eyes set very far apart under eyebrows that were pale against the deep tan of her skin—decidedly not beautiful. Not even pretty. Yet there was something about her that was appealing.

Not just her youth, or the perfection of a firm, taut body, displayed by no means to best advantage under a sea-stained skirt and shapeless woollen jumper. She had an air—rather subtle, perhaps, so that it was not apparent at first glance—of courage, of sacrifice, of unassailable patience.

Darting about the deck of the little yacht, light-footed in her soiled *alpargatas*, handling sheets, setting the heavy boom in its crutches, dragging on the clew of the jib to bring the boat's head round into the wind more quickly, hauling up the dinghy on its painter, heaving a mooring rope on to the quay, and leaping the six-foot gap after it, to make it fast to a bollard, she made every movement graceful, precise and ardent.

One learned a great many things from the few minutes between the time when the yacht slipped into the harbour and the moment when, safely moored by the stern to the quay, with the bow swung out to an anchor, she lay tranquil under the brilliant Mediterranean sun.

Efficiency and discipline marked the entire manœuvre, the perfect co-ordination of the crew of two. But their relationship was not in doubt.

"No woman," Lady Silvern, who had been standing on the yacht club verandah, confided to a friend, "would stand that sort of thing from anyone but a husband."

So the English and American colony felt their interest slightly damped. A mere prosaic, married couple—what promise of thrilling gossip could they hold out? All the same, they watched—those of them who were on the waterfront—because it was something to do and any arrival, even the conventional arrival by steamer, was exciting.

Experienced in penetrating beneath the surface and in leaping to conclusions, which they afterwards passed on with an air of authority as definite fact—the major occupation of exiles—they gathered impressions greedily; and while they noted that the woman was not even pretty enough to be a source of possible excitement to the colony and embarrassment to its women, they also noted that the man who sat at the tiller had definite potentialities.

He scowled. He was obviously short-tempered. He possessed a powerful voice, which rang out clearly over the intervening space of water and among the jumbled tall masts and slender rigging of the other yachts.

"Jump to it, can't you? Heave on that halyard before you smash the crutches. For God's sake wake up. Take hold of the clew—how the hell can I get her head round with the jibsheet adrift? Let go the anchor—let *go*! Now, you nitwit! What the blazes are you fumbling about?"

As the girl darted here and there, a volley of orders and counter orders and abuse followed her about and she said nothing.

Even when the yacht was snugly moored, she said nothing.

"Get the gangplank over and rig the handline," the man's voice commanded, sharply, and he unshipped the tiller and stood up.

"I'm going ashore while you get lunch ready," he announced next and forthwith walked along the narrow plank to the quay and marched off, hands in pockets, shoulders slightly hunched. The girl, unaided, stowed the great mainsail along the boom and gaff, lashed it with stiff sailcloth gaskets (Lady Silvern shuddered, thinking: Oh, her poor nails!) and disappeared below.

Lunch called the watchers from the club house. Most of them had some distance to go, and as they lived *en pension* in small hotels and boarding houses, it was unthinkable that they should miss a meal. So they separated, to walk, or ride in the little rattling electric trams, or catch buses to their various destinations. But over English tea that afternoon—which they had together, since it was not included *en pension*—they met again in a small select tearoom run on strictly English lines by a German Jew.

The strange couple walked in suddenly upon a deep, pregnant hush. Eyes popped, watching them, and tongues that had been clacking busily about them a moment before, were stilled.

The man entered first, giving the assembled colony a hard, insolent stare. The girl trailed at his heels. He pushed his way between the crowded tables to a vacant place, sat down and signed to his companion to take the empty chair opposite him.

"Tea," he growled to the waiter. "And hurry up."

Then, sitting back, he surveyed the watchful congregation with a look of plain disgust.

"Frowsy-looking lot, aren't they?" he remarked, in a clear voice, and the girl coloured a little and lowered ashamed eyes.

"Yes, dear."

The man grunted his satisfaction at her submissive tone and sat back again, then abused the scurrying waiter for imagined dilatoriness. Lady Silvern, curling her thin lips, a gave a shudder of distaste.

"My dear, what a barbarian!" she whispered to a friend.

"Dreadful creature!" the friend whispered back, dutifully.

"But the woman—I feel sorry for her."

"Yes—poor thing! What a life she must have!"

So the verdict was announced and accepted. The man was impossible—a rank outsider. The woman—well, poor thing, no doubt she deserved it, yet some-

(*please turn to page* 32)

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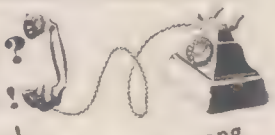

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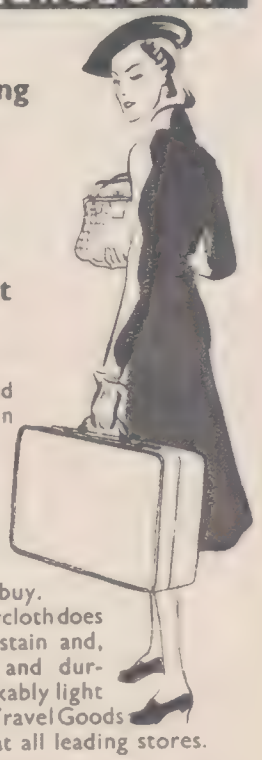

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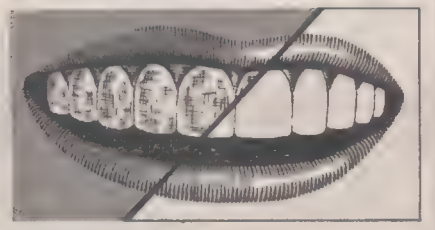

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how one could not help feeling sorry for her.

In due course, Lady Silvern condescended to make herself known to the girl.

"After all, in these outlandish places, we women have to stand by each other, haven't we? I always feel that white people should pull together." Her tone suggested that the native must be treated as a native. As she said afterwards to some friends: "It's all very well for native men to bully their wives. After all, these native women are used to that. But when an Englishman does . . ."

The girl displayed humility and a pathetic gratitude.

Her name was Meriel. She was an artist. Her husband had been an artist, but he never painted anything now. Harry Strange. Haven't I seen some of his things, Lady Silvern wanted to know, knitting her brows. But, of course, she must have. She knew the name quite well. Such a pity, that he had let himself get slack. The artistic temperament. Wasn't it funny that only men took advantage of the artistic temperament?

It came out, eventually, that poor Harry drank. He never touched liquor at sea. They lived on the yacht, which was called *Myobb*, and spent a lot of time cruising about the Mediterranean. Meriel painted, whenever she could; and, ashore, her husband drank. That was the curse of the Mediterranean—cheap drink.

Meriel was brave. She would not admit that she was miserable with her Harry. No, he was a dear, good boy, even if he didn't have any idea of the value of money, or any real morals about money at all. He just didn't know. He never meant any harm, but you simply couldn't make him understand.

He ran up bills, he borrowed from casual acquaintances and then he couldn't pay. It was all so very hateful. Meriel loathed owing money. Lady Silvern sympathised, because she had a very comfortable income and no husband, now, to dissipate it, and almost everybody in the colony had borrowed from her at one time or another and had forgotten to repay. Lady Silvern hated this business of borrowing just as much as Meriel did—and perhaps with better reason. She considered that the poor girl showed the very best possible spirit and was to be pitied deeply.

The poor girl did her best to resist being pumped. She was pumped unmercifully, day and night. Of course, she and Harry had to join in with all the activities of the colony, while they were there; they could not get out of it, everyone meant to be so kind to them. And if Harry were utterly impossible, Meriel was a quiet, unassuming, grateful little thing, and it was a pleasure to help her in any way.

She was so pathetically proud. He ordered her about, jeered at her in public, humiliated her at every opportunity, and was as rude as could be to all her new friends. A most antisocial young man. Lady Silvern had many experiences of him, which she bore with fortitude for Meriel's sake.

The first was when she asked him, brightly, what the yacht's name meant. Perhaps it was Greek, or Turkish, since, of course, they had cruised all over the Mediterranean?

"M—y—o—b—b," Harry spelled out for her, with relish.

"Yes, but what does it mean?"

"Mind your own business."

Lady Silvern recoiled. Harry guffawed heartily. When she recovered, she blinked, dithered and then said, lamely:

"Oh, I see. The name, of course. Ha, ha! I thought for a moment—I mean—how—how clever and amusing. *Myobb*—Mind Your Own Busi—but there are two—oh!"

She broke off just in time and Meriel blushed scarlet. Of course this was just the sort of stupid joke in doubtful taste that Harry Strange would indulge in. Lady Silvern felt humiliated and outraged. Then she noticed Meriel's quivering lips and went hot with indignation. But she did not make matters worse by any useless comment.

When you got to know her, Meriel lost a lot of her extreme plainness. True, she still dressed in a haphazard way; in old, worn clothes and her hair was dreadful. But there was something oddly appealing about her, especially when she wore that lost look.

She spent a lot of time painting—harbour scenes mainly. She made effective use of the imposing outline of the cathedral that dominated the town. She was very clever at boats. But then she had spent so much time in boats, and she had a passion for the sea. That, Lady Silvern surmised in her own private circle, was the bond that kept those two together. That and a sense of loyalty. Why else should a talented girl like Meriel continue to live with such a boor of a husband?

For three weeks, the colony tingled with excitement over Meriel and Harry Strange. The waterfront gained a new popularity. People could be seen strolling along past the *Myobb* at all hours. People could be seen lingering past, appearing absorbed in their own thoughts, while their ears were stretched to catch the sounds of marital strife that emanated from the after cabin hatch.

Those three weeks were a source of deep joy to everybody. They had quite underestimated the value of this addition to their ranks. Everything else paled into insignificance. Even when Hetty Lamond went off to Colensa by herself, and was rumoured to be living with a Spanish novelist, on the pretext of helping him with the English characters in a book he was writing, people dismissed this scandalous and shameful morsel with a mere exclamation and passed on at once to the latest news from the *Myobb*.

Strange was drinking. He had been

"Hurry they've almost got it lowered!"

seen going into various low native haunts where all sorts of orgies were held—my dear, simply revolting! He had been seen with that Swiss girl who took drugs and lived all alone in a tiny flat and was said to pay her landlord in something other than currency.

He had no use for the few men of the colony. He ignored them, or treated them with sardonic amusement, which made them very flustered and indignant. Once when Meriel invited Lady Silvern and friends to tea on the yacht, he put a drop of paraffin into the waterbreaker and completely ruined the taste of the tea and everything else.

He hobnobbed with the natives, went out fishing with them and smoked contraband cigarettes quite openly. Lady Silvern would have liked to smoke contraband cigarettes, but it meant having dealings with the natives and perhaps having trouble with those absurd creatures in their comic-opera uniforms and carbines, and she preferred to pay more and not risk humiliation. One had to maintain prestige. But quite evidently Harry Strange was hand in glove with the contrabandists and had neither conscience nor a sense of dignity, nor any other British quality. He was beyond grace.

He ran into debt.

Meriel, of course, would never have told. But Lady Silvern was not to be thwarted in the pursuit of her duty. She conceived it to be her duty to know the truth, and she sought it assiduously. If she invariably disseminated it afterwards, her motives were of the highest. So a few cunningly contrived verbal pitfalls, and Meriel was trapped.

Harry had borrowed money from various natives, had run up huge bills at cafés and shops and bars. And they couldn't possibly pay them. Worse still, it looked as if they would have to sell the yacht—and they had no other home. Her own tiny allowance, on which they subsisted, would never keep them in a hotel, or a flat, or even a single room. The yacht was their only asset.

Lady Silvern solved the problem with the air of a fairy godmother.

"Why don't you sell some of your pictures?" she cried, triumphantly.

Meriel hadn't ever thought of that. She was hoping to have a show, some time, when they could get back to England. But perhaps they would never get back to England at all and she would never have enough money to have a show!

"Then you ought to sell some of them at once," Lady Silvern said and felt excited. She was very fond of Meriel by this time. Those three weeks had been delicious. She was grateful to Meriel for having come and for having brought so much excitement into their dull lives.

She contemplated with dismay, the possibility of Meriel's leaving soon. Yet she realised that it was better so. A prolonged stay would only end in anti-climax. People would get bored with the Strange scandal and it would be awkward having them hanging about after one's interest in them had evaporated. Lady Silvern did not, of course, admit it—even to herself—but she could never have patience with people after the stir died down—except, of course, dear charming people who were permanent residents and unimpeachably respectable, like herself. For the odd, wandering, lost souls she had a fund of sympathy that dried up when their entertainment value departed.

So she divined an opportunity to make a splendid gesture and gain lasting merit by an act of pure, disinterested kindness in speeding their departure.

She announced that she would have a show of Meriel's pictures in her house, a pleasant, modern villa a little distance out of town. Of course, all her friends would rally round and help.

They rallied. The show opened, with several little red discs in evidence, to encourage people. Soon there were several more little red discs. After all, everybody could understand those conventionally pretty pictures. Altogether eleven red discs were affixed before the show was over and Meriel was ecstatically grateful. The money—about sixty pounds—would enable her to pay off all poor Harry's debts and lay in stores and get back to sea, where at least Harry could be relied upon not to get drunk.

Secretly, the hope was cherished among the colony that Harry would take the money and blue it all in one gorgeous spree that could be talked about for months, and then perhaps Meriel would be driven to desperation and do something spectacular and thrilling.

But this hope was dashed.

The very next day, Harry and Meriel could be seen stumbling along under loads of stores and preparing the yacht for sea. Just after lunch, Meriel dashed off to take farewells, bubbling over with a gratitude and delight that made her almost pretty. Then the stern rope was cast off, the gangplank pulled on board and dismantled, the anchor hove short and the big jib set.

The *Myobb* began to gather way, slipping over her anchor, which Meriel hauled on board as Harry steered. Then the great mainsail crept up the mast, took the wind and bellied out. The yacht lay over a little, her deck tilting, her tall mast sloping and a feather of spray appeared under her long bowsprit. Soon she was clear of the harbour and headed out into the blue, with the dinghy straining at her painter in the creaming wake.

The watchers sighed a little, thinking of the good money for which they had nothing to show but some pretty daubs of paint on canvas; and at the tiller Harry Strange, with a pipe between his teeth, began to hum a song.

His eyes lit up and twinkled, his lips parted in a grin.

Meriel, coming aft, dropped into the cockpit beside him.

"Who says you can't sell your pictures, Merrikins—what?"

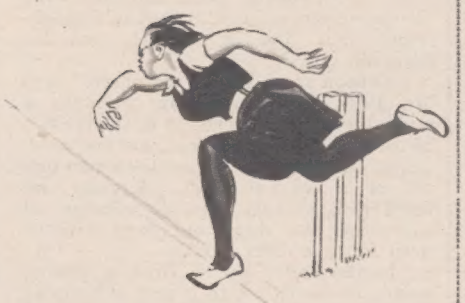
She reached down and ruffled his hair.

"Darling," she said, "you were marvellous. How those old hags hated you! But we really did give them value for their money, didn't we? I mean, they'll be as happy as anything, talking about us, for months!"

"Of course they will," Harry chuckled; "and now—where'll we go next?"

# COCKNEY IN THE COUNTRY

continued from page 21



Jack Preedy, the ploughman, played the first ball with his ribs—the next shattered his wicket

rabbits on my best lettuces than wire myself in.

And if the rabbits had a good season this year, the cricketers had one just as good. For it is not everybody who can play village cricket, particularly as it is played at our village.

Oxford and Cambridge colleges come here, thinking they are in for a picnic, and the village just wipe them out.

A crack mechanised cavalry regiment came over; but they missed their armoured cars, when they faced our demon bowlers and went back to Aldershot well beaten.

The only people to beat the village were a team from Boveen, the famous girl's school.

The village had optimistically agreed to control their fast bowler—for a smack in the nose from a rising ball is not considered to be a matrimonial asset, even by the gallant aspirants to the hands of the hearty young ladies of Boveen—and they did not repent until it was too late.

Those girls slogged the village bowling all round the pitch. They put two balls through Mrs. Boom's greenhouse—which always counts for six—and one clean over the smithy; registered a direct hit on the sorer and laid out the wicketkeeper.

Then the village went in to face their body line expert.

She was a big hefty girl, with a lightning delivery that was apparently modelled on Mr. Gilligan. If she had been playing against Australia, the Dominions Secretary would certainly have had to intervene.

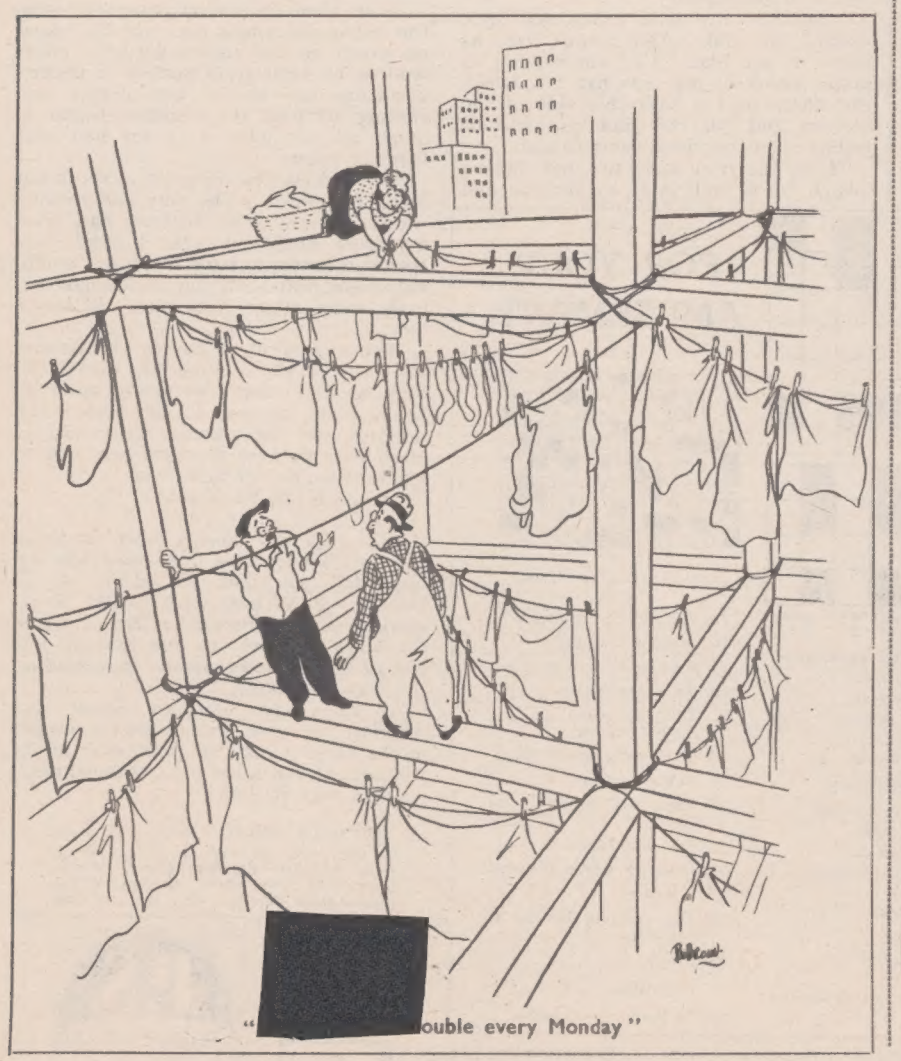
As it was, her first ball caught Jack Preedy, the ploughman, such a thump in the ribs that it nearly knocked the wind out of him. The next one shattered his wicket. Johnny Darwin, the woodman, got a crack on the hand that caused him to drop his bat and say one or two things that may, or may not, have been new to the young ladies of Boveen.

Then the village's star bat, who had played for Oxford and his county, took a smack on the head that put him out of the match.

In the end, the village scored 63 and the girls 150.

They ate the biggest tea we'd ever heard of, piled noisily into their motor coach and drove off roaring hearty greetings.

*Next Week*—Week-enders.



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Here is a tonic which makes a real man or woman of you in a few hours; frazzled nerves full of vim; gloomy thoughts gone, faith strengthened, hope renewed before nightfall, life worth living to-morrow. It is the Doctor's Best Tonic for heart, nerves, stomach and kidneys—it prevents palpitation, faintness, heart failure, tremblings, run-down condition and picks you up in hot weather. Don't imagine yourself into an illness, have a good rest, take this tonic and be normal in a few days. Ask for **"Blue Lion Fox Nuts."** Shadforth Prescription No. 632. Prices **1/-** (25), **1/9** (50), **2/6** (72), **4/6** (144).

*The Shadforth Booklet on Heart Troubles* (*No. P.S.*320), *Post Free on request.*

**HEADACHE**

**RHEUMATISM—SCIATICA—INFLUENZA**

All Nerve Pains, including those of Neuralgia, Colds, Influenza, Headache, Sciatica, Neuritis, etc., are promptly relieved by **"Shadspro" Compound,** the new painkiller (**No. 263**). This formula is non-purgative and does not upset the stomach. It quickly relieves pain and renders movement possible. It reduces inflammation and temperature, and kills bacteria. Prices : **6d**• (10), **1/3** (25), **2/-** (50), **3/6** (100 tablets).

In exceptionally painful cases use a **Neuritis Cachet (No. 622A).** Prices: **3/-** (6), and **5/9** (12).

*The Shadforth Booklet on Neuritis* (*No. P.S.* 236), *Post Free.*

**HAY FEVER**

**CATARRHAL CONGESTIONS, NOSE COLDS**

An effective nasal antiseptic of the ephedrine class is now provided in **"Shadrinol."** It is packed with a pipette for placing drops in the nose and with a spray for applying to the back of the mouth and throat. It quickly relieves Nasal Catarrh, Head Colds, Coryza, Hoarseness, Laryngitis (occasionally Bronchitis and Asthma) and general catarrhal congestions of the mucus membrances of nose and throat.

Complete with directions. Price **1/3** (including pipette) and **2/6** (including pipette and atomizer). **Prescription No. 1445XL.**

*The Shadforth Booklet* (*No. P.S.* 348) *on this subject is supplied post free.*

**PROSTATITIS**

**30 per cent. of Men Above Fifty Suffer Needlessly**
**THEY LIVE IN DISCOMFORT BY DAY AND THEIR REST IS DISTURBED AT NIGHT**

What they need is the mild, soothing antiseptic provided in **"Shadforters"** (Shadforth brand Bladder Comforters). They act like a charm. They are prescribed for chill on the bladder and kidneys, cystitis or bladder inflammation, constant getting up nights, burning, prostatitis, leg pains, gravel or stone, rheumatism, sciatica, etc. Don't worry yourself into a nervous wreck. Get immediate relief and avoid an operation with the proved remedy. Ask for **"Shadforters"** (Shadforth Prescription No. 285). Prices : **1/4** (25), **2/6** (50), **4/6** (100 pills).

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For dry, wet or scaly eczema, an approved remedy is found in **Eczema Ointment (No. 1369).** It is also excellent for Dandruff or Scurf.

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# NEXT WEEK

UNTIL a few years ago, B. L. Jacot (who introduces a new character, "Mungo the Magnificent," next week) crept through life, so he says, fearing the day when someone would pull him up and demand what he, himself, among all the busy millions who work for their living, had to justify his own worthless existence. All that is different now.

He has, so he continues, the answer. He can point out that he was once on the staff of PASSING SHOW. It is no use our trying to deny it.

Jacot was on the staff—until the editor found what was wrong with the paper. But he (that is, Jacot) has been other things, besides. He has been shot through the head by a machine-gun bullet, for a start.

This happened when he was seventeen, and the pilot of a fighting aircraft in the Great War. He went on to Oxford, after the war, to share a room in college with Mr. Hore-Belisha and become what many sportsmen firmly believe (even when sober) was the greatest wing three-quarter Oxford ever put in the field against Cambridge.

He also swam in the Olympic Games, finishing third in the 100 metres that Johnnie Weismuller won, because, so he says, there was no fourth competitor. But then he's always saying something.

He joined the staff of *The Times* and, after four years of valuable work there, was most enthusiastically recommended by the editor for a job 4,789 miles away—in Hollywood. That was how he came to spend three years with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, writing dialogue.

He has just returned from a spell as a war correspondent in Spain and is now going to settle down and live in his flat in the Temple.

He has been a contributor to PASSING SHOW ever since he began writing short stories. In fact, PASSING SHOW must take the blame for being one of the first English periodicals to buy his work.

His stories are now widely read in the United States and he is going to write plenty more for his favourite publication. We fear that he means us!

Meanwhile, the new creation, Mungo, is nearly as magnificent as his creator. He is hot stuff at organising duels, straightening the crooked path of love and even if he might be thought a little interfering—well, that's what you expect from such an uncle.

# YOU'RE TELLING US!

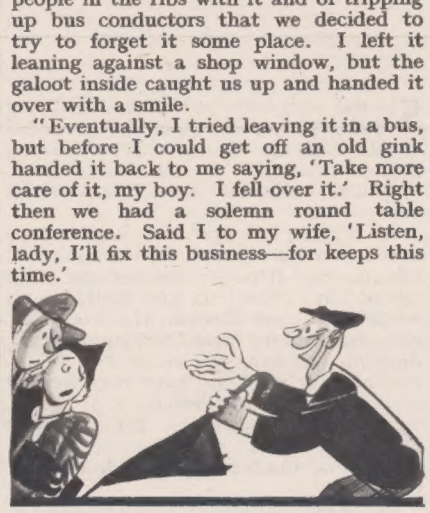
WE are frequently brought to task by edifying and sagacious critics, who, in the wisdom of their old age, see something lamentable in the relish with which we enjoy the slapstick farces of life.

But we continue to delight in any story that smacks of buffoonery whether it be of a man with a hangover or just a man with an umbrella. For that reason we can no longer keep back the saga of Mr. Peter Daniel Ross, a Canadian, now to be found at Walworth, S.E., who, on leaving his native shore, was told that an Englishman's first line of defence was his umbrella.

"As soon as we landed over here," says Mr. Ross, "we bought an umbrella, a really big one, large enough to shelter two of us, at a cost of nineteen and sixpence, which was like handing me back two bits out of a five-dollar bill. Anyway, we toted that blamed portable wigwam all over town for days and days without even seeing a drop of rain.

"In the end I got so tired of poking people in the ribs with it and of tripping up bus conductors that we decided to try to forget it some place. I left it leaning against a shop window, but the galoot inside caught us up and handed it over with a smile.

"Eventually, I tried leaving it in a bus, but before I could get off an old gink handed it back to me saying, 'Take more care of it, my boy. I fell over it.' Right then we had a solemn round table conference. Said I to my wife, 'Listen, lady, I'll fix this business—for keeps this time.'



"So we headed for a telephone booth, carrying the umbrella as though it were already lost property and planted it in the corner under the ledge that carries the 'phone directories. And then we ran for it. After doing a hundred yards in about even time, we looked back casually and I said, 'I can't see anybody. It's O.K. But let's keep going.'

"Suddenly my wife grabs my arm. 'Rain,' she said. And it was, too, as heavy as you like. 'Oh,' she wailed, 'A taxi. Think of my new hat. A taxi!' But there isn't a taxi this side of the horizon and all the time my wife is yelling about her dress being ruined.

"I hit the trail again for that durned 'phone booth and, later, as my wife and I stand in the pouring rain still waiting for a taxi or a bus or street-car, I keep on saying, 'Some dirty skunk pinched that there umbrella!'"

After that we look at the rest of the mail and feel rather like the golfer who shouted to his caddie from the depths of the rough, "Never mind the ball, caddie, come and find me."

For there is so much to be dealt with that we feel only spaghetti would realise how involved we are. We might answer the angry Scotsmen, weep with the distressed, swear great oaths with those who have found new missions, but instead

we will go on laughing. This time with Mr. E. Cook, of Seven Kings, Ilford, Essex, for asking us where all this rushing about is going to get us.

As an instance of what might happen if you do things too quickly, he describes a scene in Holborn during the rush hour.

"A woman was being hustled on to a bus by a friend," says he, "and in the excitement of saying goodbye she turned round and kissed the wrong woman. All might have passed off unnoticed had not the woman who received the kiss under false pretences set that part of London ablaze with hate by saying, 'You don't know what other people's bad breath will lead to.'"

We are not only grateful to Mr. Cook for helping us in a lifelong campaign against rushing into anything that can't be absorbed in pint pots with bread and cheese, but also to Mr. Miller Webb, of Govan, Glasgow, in his effort to warn us of the evils of being too smart.

You will have heard of the lecturer who could never understand why he did not gain the complete confidence of his audience," he says, hopefully. "He always had his lectures word-perfect, his gestures were rehearsed for hours, his clothes were the best he could get, yet his audience was merely polite.

"And then he wanted to quote from the Bible and could not find the paper on which he had copied his little piece. And as he went from pocket to pocket, upsetting the set of his clothes and ruffling his hair, his audience began to laugh as no audience of his had ever laughed before.

"He had learned the great secret of not being too smart. The only lecture over which he had ever faltered had been his most successful. He learned, too, that it is better to have the crowd laughing at you than with you. I thought this little story might help you. It has a moral."

Of that there is no doubt. It has also the stuff of which alibis are made. In fact, we don't think we need answer all those critics shouting for our blood for a hundred and one reasons. After all, we erred only because it would help you to laugh at us, an' all that, wha'?

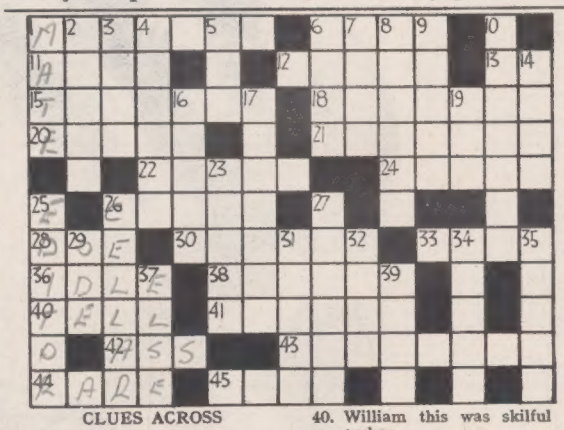
Thanks a lot, Mr. Webb.

Before closing down to think up some more mistakes, we must tell you that Mr. Harry A. T. Double, of Walnut Tree Walk, Stowmarket, Suffolk, entered a railway carriage the other day only to find that all but one of the seven occupants were reading the PASSING SHOW.

"I knew the PASSING SHOW was popular," he says, "but to see six people, in the same place, all interested in its contents at the same time, stunned me."

Can't take it, huh?

**YOU'RE TELLING US!** Half a guinea is paid for each letter or quotation printed on this page. Address; "Readers' Letters," "Passing Show," 93 Long Acre, London, W.C.2. Please state whether Mr., Mrs., or Miss.



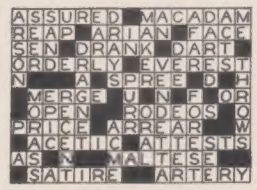
# FOR YOUR AMUSEMENT

CLUES ACROSS

1. Grandeur or dignity.
6. A fish.
11. Extent.
12. Devotion expected from such a person.
13. Not completely off.
15. Locks.
18. Intercede.
20. Familiar planet.
21. Very learned.
22. Colouring matter.
24. Perhaps for confinement.
26. A throat ailment.
28. 29 down transformed into female animal.
30. Agitated.
33. Somewhat off the mark.
36. Not employed.
38. Small people.
40. William this was skilful archer.
41. Suitable for consumption.
42. Beast of burden.
43. Oriental queens.
44. Not of common occurrence.
45. Amounts owing.

CLUES DOWN

1. Team for companion.
2. Adorn or equip.
3. Mock or deride.
4. Annual occasion (date not fixed).
5. Small hillock.
6. To arrive.
7. To affirm positively.
8. Lessen.
9. This may be overweening.
10. Confined.
14. For services rendered.
16. A young branch.
17. Also for services rendered.
19. To be out of sorts.
23. This is urged in sea motion (hidden).
25. Or tide will supply this.
26. In the basement.
27. There is a vehicle in this cloud.
29. This is in verse.
31. Balance, maybe delicate.
32. A hollow.
34. Too many in the fire is not good.
35. Efface.
37. Otherwise.
39. To put in any position.



*Solution to last week's puzzle*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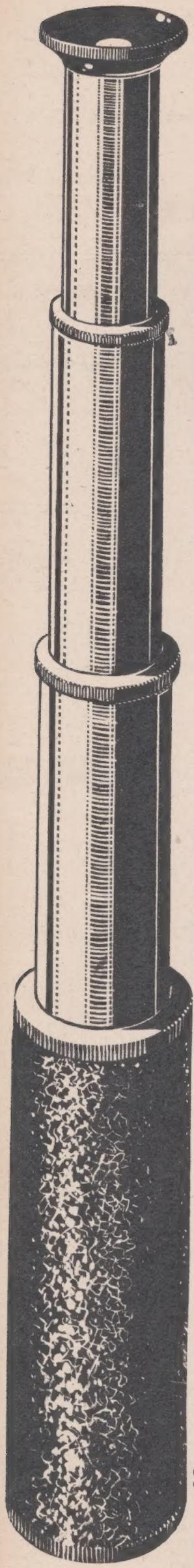

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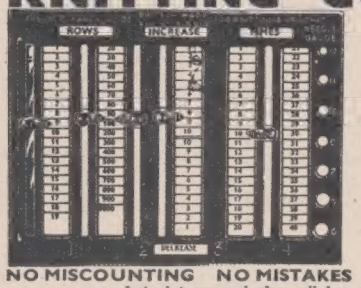


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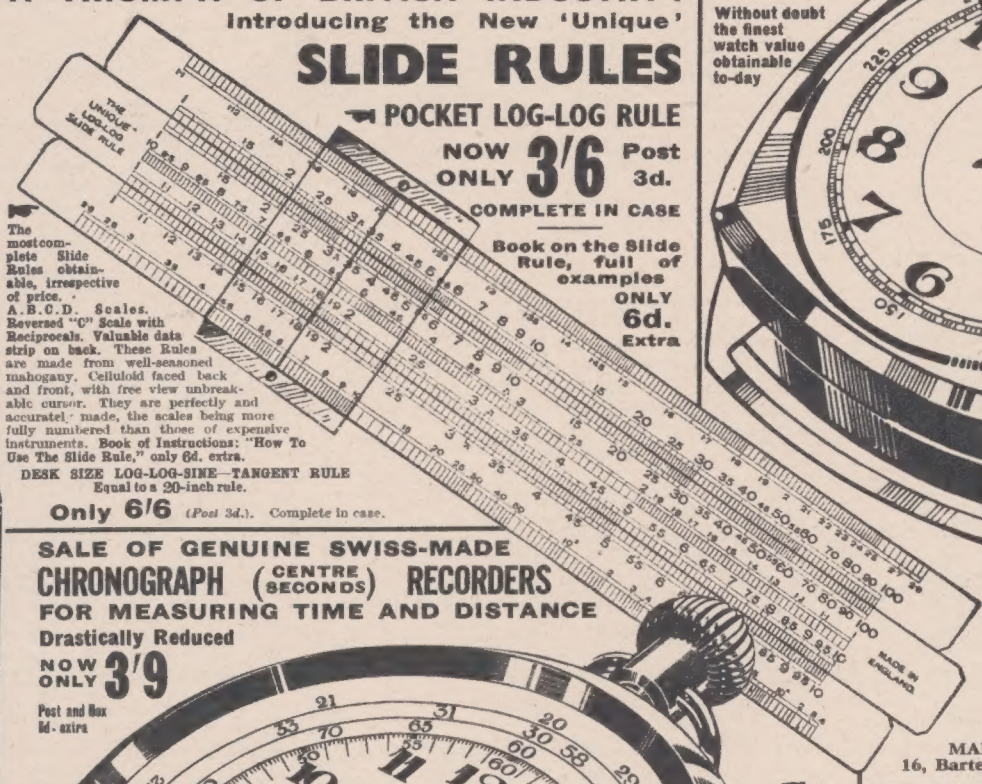


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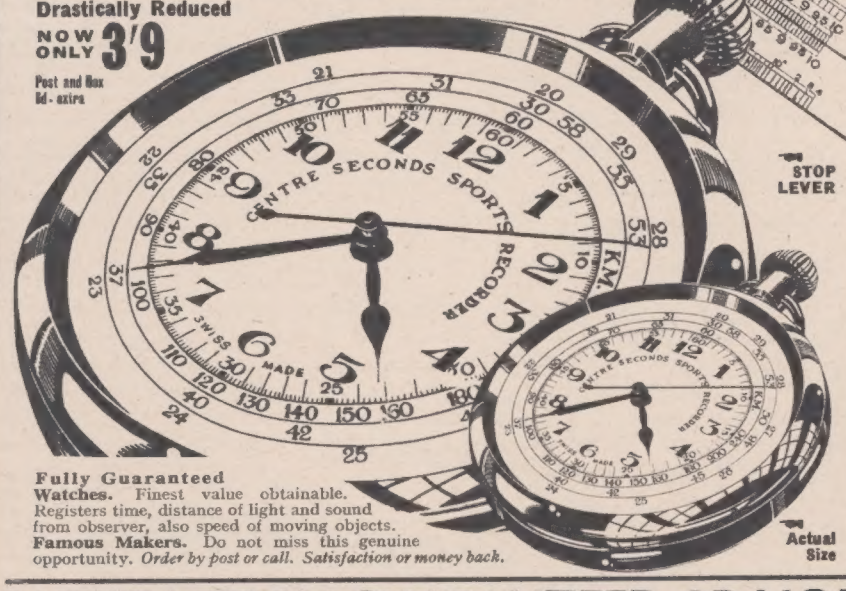


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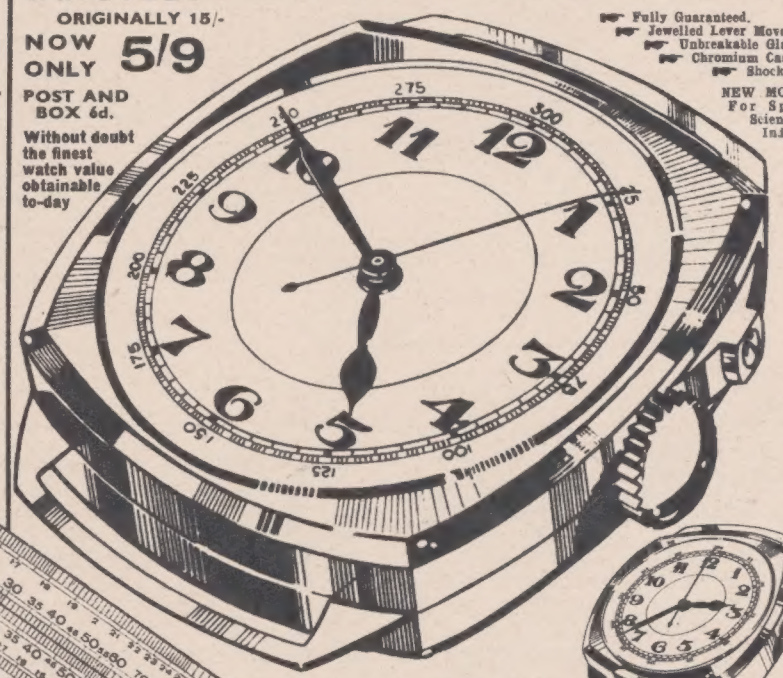

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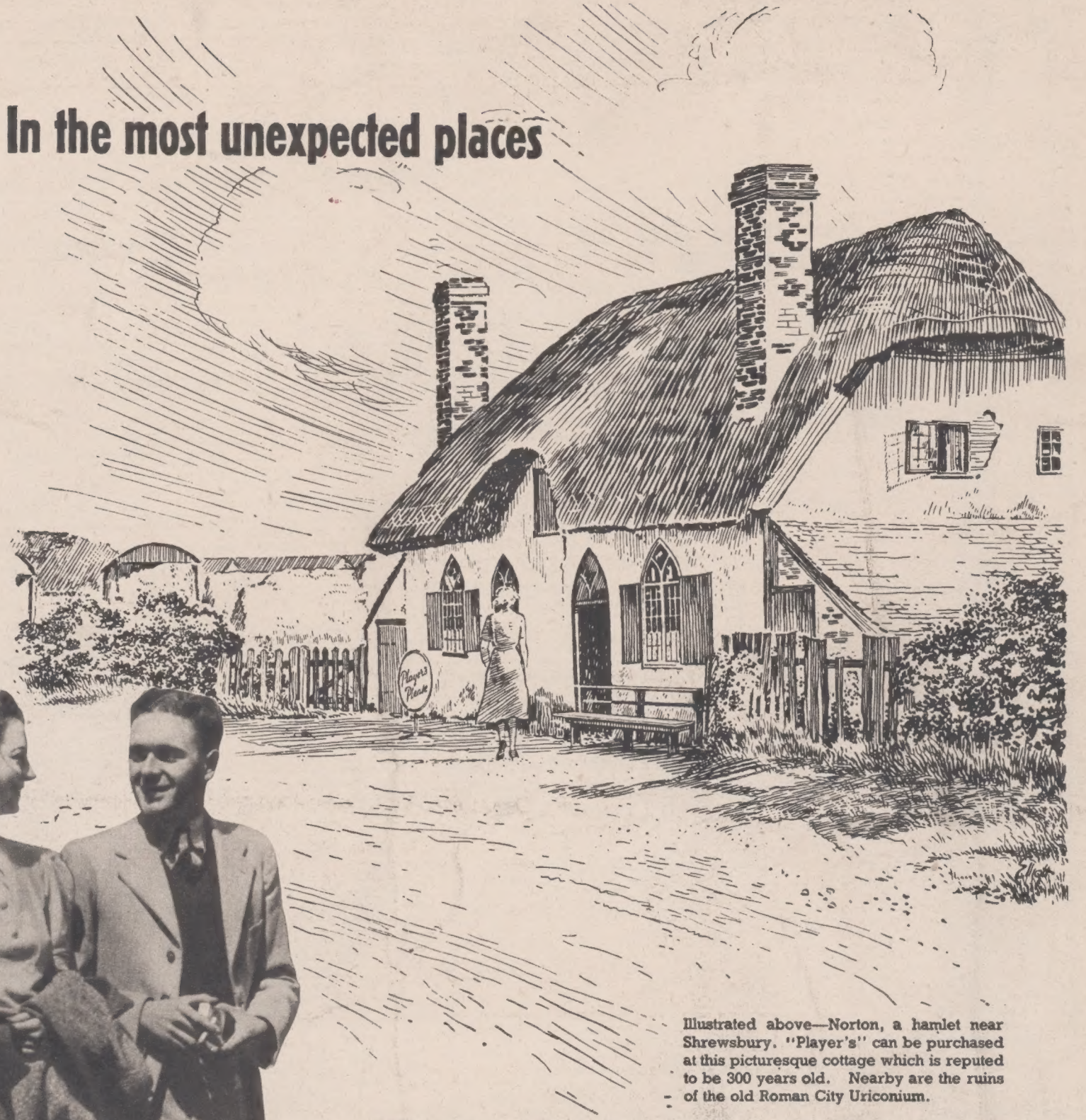


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